THE THOUSAND-SYLLABLED SPEECH

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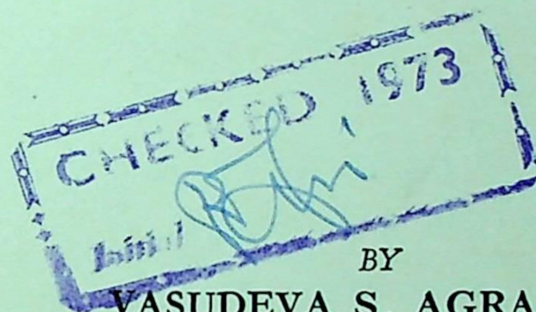
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I. VIṢION IN LONG DARKNESS

INTRODUCTION AND ANALYSIS, TEXT AND TRANSLATION
OF THE ASYA-VĀMĪYA SŪKTA OF ṚISHI DĪRGHATAMAS

(Ṛigveda 1.164. 1–52)



BY

VASUDEVA S. AGRAWALA

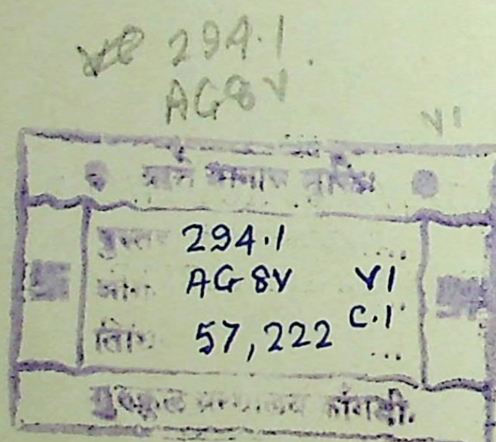
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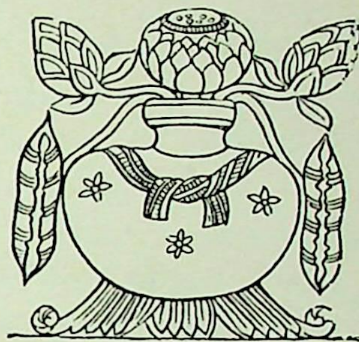
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स्तुता मया॑ वरदा वे॑दमाता



"WHAT I HAVE SOUGHT IS TO UNDERSTAND
WHAT HAS BEEN SAID."

इति शुश्रुम धीराणां ये नस्तद् विचचक्षिरे ।

Vasudeva S. Agrawala

PREFACE

The Asya Vāmīya Hymn of the Ṛig Veda (1.164.1-52) illustrates the depth of the mental vision of Ṛishi Dīrghatamas, obviously a pseudonym given to a thinker who grapples with Long Darkness, or Mystery of Creation. Dīrghatamas is the type of all men of philosophy and science who have cast their eyes of comprehension on the visible world. Their vision is focussed on the invisible source, the First Cause which was a Mystery of yore and a Mystery now. The Great Question (*Saṁpraśna*) still holds to its eternal sign of interrogation. A hundred-thousand formulations have come from the Mind of Man and many will follow in subsequent ages. Dīrghatamas stands at the apex of them all asking : "Where is the Teacher, knowing the solution ? Where is the pupil, coming to the Teacher for revelation of the Mystery ? Who has seen the First Cause, from which emanated the primeval creation ? How have the *Bhūtas* (*Asthanvat*) come from the *Prāṇas* (*Anasthā*) ? The mind reels in ignorance. If there be one who claims to know, let him declare it here and now. The Son who can expound this secret I will accept as Father. What poet has given the origin of the Godlike mind ? The Cauldron is boiling, so I say, whether we know the mystery of its Heat or not." It is a sampling of the knocking of Dīrghatamas at the massive Mystery. It shows the vivacity of his mind, rushing in a hundred thought-forms. He takes quick snaps of the Cosmos itself, pointing to many symbols that carry the tale of its secret. The Seer seems to take the confident view that the imprisoned divine splendour, although a veritable Mystery, is present in every manifest form and is open to understanding.

Dīrghatamas was a thinker of the Vedic age, naturally his ebullitions are cast in the thought-moulds of his time. But easily shorn of their veneer, as attempted in this commentary, they are eloquent with a world-language of which the meaning belongs to mankind.

This language is that of Nature itself in the form of the created objects, each of which conceals the Great Mystery at the core of its existence, which has to be recovered there (*bhūteshu bhūteshu vichitya dhīrāḥ*, KU. 2.5). We now study it as the language of symbols; the ancients looked upon it as *Nidāna Vidyā*, e.g. they think of the *prāṇic* power of *Gāyatrī* and see it visible in the Flaming Fire, and accept Agni as the symbol of Gāyatrī (*yo vā atrāgnir Gāyatrī sā nidānena*, ŚB. 1.8.2.15). They observed the quality of Motherhood in the Earth and also in the rhythmic creativity

of the Three-footed Gāyatrī Metre and by virtue of the *Nidāna Vidyā*, draw a parallel between the two (*Gāyatrī vā eshā nidānena*, ŚB. 1.4.1.36). They conceived of the generative potencies of Mother Nature and of the Cow, and identified the two through a symbolical language of limitless meaning, creating the picture of the Thousnad-fold Universal Cow who is the same as the Thousand-syllabled Speech (*Vāg vā eshā nidānena yat sāhasrī gauḥ, tasyā etat sahasraṁ vāchaḥ prajātam*, ŚB. 4.5.8.4). Thus the Vedas and the Brāhmaṇas both speak an identical language of symbolism. As the author of the Bhāgavata puts it : "The style of *Śabda Brahma* or *Veda* is to make statements in words of which the apparent dictionary meaning is not the real meaning, and the mind entangled in that maze fails to see the sense." (*Śābdasya hi brahmaṇa esha panthā yannāmabhir dhyāyati dhīrapārthaiḥ, paribhramaṁstatra na vindate'rthān māyāmaye vāsanayā śayānaḥ*, Bhāgavata, 2.2.2.).

In the words of Coomaraswamy, 'Visual symbols are essentially the language of metaphysics as words are of philosophy' (Angles And Titans, p. 414, f. n.).

From this point of view each created object, both natural and human, or an activity, or a thought becomes a typical symbol pregnant with meaning. A complete analysis of the Ṛig Veda and other Vedic texts places in our hands a comprehensive dictionary of symbol language. Such a lexicon is the first step to Vedic exegesis and remains to be done.

Each symbol to us is a *Vidyā*, i.e. sampling of a doctrine, e. g.

अग्नि विद्या	आज्य विद्या	गो विद्या	तानूनप्त्र विद्या
अश्वत्थ विद्या	आप्री विद्या	गन्धर्व विद्या	तिस्रो देवी विद्या
अदिति विद्या	आत्मन्वी विद्या	गुहा विद्या	त्वष्टृ विद्या
अश्वमेध विद्या	आयुष्टोम विद्या	गायत्री विद्या	त्रिविक्रम विद्या
अक्षर विद्या	आम्भृणी विद्या	गोपा विद्या	त्रिपुर विद्या
असुर विद्या	इध्म विद्या	गृहमेध विद्या	त्रयः केशिनः विद्या
अर्णव विद्या	इन्द्र विद्या	गोष्टोम विद्या	त्रेताग्नि विद्या
अम्भो विद्या	इष् ऊर्ज विद्या	गणपति विद्या	त्रीणि ज्योतींषि विद्या
अमृतमृत्यु विद्या	उखासंभरण विद्या	ग्रह विद्या	देव विद्या
अहोरात्र विद्या	उर्वशी विद्या .	चयन विद्या	देवरथ विद्या
अज विद्या	ऋत सत्य विद्या	चमस विद्या	दर्शपौर्णमास विद्या
अथर्व विद्या	ऋत्विक् विद्या	चित्र शिशु विद्या	दक्ष विद्या
अग्नीषोमीय विद्या	ऋषि विद्या	छन्दो विद्या	दक्षिणा विद्या
अपराजिता विद्या	ऋतु विद्या	ज्योतिष्टोम विद्या	द्यावापृथिवी विद्या
आदित्य विद्या	कूर्म विद्या	जातवेदो विद्या	दैव्याहोतारौ विद्या
आभू-अभ्व विद्या	क्षर विद्या	तपो विद्या	दिक् स्वस्तिक विद्या

द्रोणकलश विद्या	ब्रह्म विद्या	राज विद्या	सलिल विद्या
देवासुर विद्या	ब्रह्मौदन प्रवर्ग्य विद्या	लोक विद्या	साकंजप्राण विद्या
धर्म विद्या	ब्रह्मणस्पति विद्या	वाग्विद्या	सूर्य विद्या
नारायण विद्या	बृहस्पति विद्या	विश्वकर्मा विद्या	सूर्या विद्या
नाक विद्या	मित्रावरुण विद्या	वसु विद्या	सदसद् विद्या
प्रजापति विद्या	मनु विद्या	वयुन विद्या	समुद्र विद्या
परमेष्ठी विद्या	महिमा विद्या	वेन विद्या	स्वधा विद्या
पुरुष विद्या	मरुद्गण विद्या	व्योम विद्या	स्वाहा विद्या
पर्यङ्क विद्या	मातरिश्वा विद्या	वषट्कार विद्या	सुपर्ण विद्या
पुष्कर विद्या	यज्ञ विद्या	विराज् विद्या	सप्तस्वसृ विद्या
पितृ विद्या	यक्ष विद्या	वराह विद्या	स्वयंभू विद्या
परावर विद्या	यम विद्या	वाज विद्या	सोम विद्या
प्रमा विद्या	यज्ञओपश विद्या	शुक्रसृष्टि विद्या	सरस्वती विद्या
प्रतिमा विद्या	रुद्र विद्या	शिपिविष्ट विद्या	संवत्सर विद्या
प्राण विद्या	रात्रि विद्या	शाक्वरी विद्या	सावित्री विद्या
पशु विद्या	रोदसी विद्या	शकट विद्या	स्तोम विद्या
पवमान विद्या	रजो विद्या	सप्ततन्तु विद्या	हृदय विद्या

The basic truth of this approach in respect of Vedic meaning will have to be realised, and that forms the creed underlying the present commentary. The Vedic thought travels where it listeth. Scholars may find it essential to reorientate their point of view in order to retrieve the lost meaning and resolve the existing stalemate of Vedic interpretation. The dictionary meanings are quite all right as found in the works of modern scholars of East and West, and also in the writings of ancient commentators; but the recovery of the consistent metaphysical ideas of the Vedic thinkers has to be accomplished in full justice to those authors endowed with the power of thought. Each author is always transparent in his meaning and terminology to his contemporaries, and one should not deny this clarity to the thinkers of Vedic times. They spoke an idiom of which the meaning was perspicacious to those to whom it was addressed.

A question may be asked as to why the Vedic thinkers selected the style of symbolism which we evaluate as obscure today. The answer is that it was a deliberate choice. In order to explain the problem reagrding the creation of the Cosmos and of the three primeval entities of which it is constituted, viz. Mind, Life and Matter, the Vedic thinkers seized upon the working of the Cosmos itself as manifested in the several categories and objects of creation. The Ocean, Sky, Earth, Air, Water, Fire, Sun, Moon, Mountains, Rivers, Forests, Trees, Animals, Men, Clouds, Rain, each one of these and many more are objects in Nature which stand out as the

alphabets of world language robed in silence, yet eloquent with exploding meaning that can be deciphered according to the intellectual attainment of each thinker. The human body, eyes, ears, hands, feet, in-breath, out-breath, light, sound, movement—all these introduce us to a rich world of symbolical significance.

There are several advantages with respect to this method of conveying the cosmogonical ideas; firstly, this language is lasting through time and space. It is for man everywhere, already within his comprehension. He understands its meaning as a matter of course, being familiar with the concrete aspect of symbols in life, e.g. the significance of the cow is well known as the reproductive mother giving milk. Once the mind begins to think on this pattern, it enters an expanded orbit of meaning and recovers several isolated strands which build up a rich picture of the truth apprehended by each symbol.

The language of symbols is elastic and susceptible to decoding its multiple meaning. This is an advantage for it is possible to present a comprehensive world of thought through simple and minimum use of words; e.g. the identity of the Earth with the Mother confers rich ideas of wide application at several levels relating to plants, animals, and men. Universal Nature or Infinity is Archetypal of the principle of Motherhood. For the penetrating vision of the Seers the real objective is the deep meaning inherent in the cosmic creation which was termed as Veda, Ṛishi or Chhandas principle. Words are mere symbols of ideas like the manifest dependent on the unmanifest substratum. According to the Seer of this Hymn, Spoken Speech is only one-fourth in relation to the inspirational world of Ideas which is three-fourths. Thus the Vedas are couched in a terminology which is invested with meaning that is universal, elastic and concretised in the natural objects ever present before us. The divine Brahman has identified himself with creation called *Vāk* and Man is tackling *Vāk* with his mind for the meaning behind it. The ordinary meaning of *Vāk* is human Speech but it is the highest manifest faculty in Man and is accepted as the concretised symbol of the mystery of the Mind. The problem of the meaning of the Ṛig Veda thus lies in the hands of a unique language deriving in the fullest measure from the divine creation itself. The ancient belief in the divinity of the Vedas rationally signifies that the meaning behind words is drawn from the cosmic source. Whereas words belong to the level of Matter (*martya*), the meaning is ever radiating and coming from a transcendent source that is immortal. The two concepts of *Devaṁ Manaḥ*, God as Mind, and *Sahasrākshharā Vāk*, Speech of Thousand Syllables, are the highest contribution of Rishi Dirghatamas to the world of metaphysics. It is hardly possible to make a bolder or more eloquent statement about the nature of human Mind and human Speech, both flashing as unknown Mysteries.

The Indian tradition as found in the Vedas and elaborated in all subsequent literature does not stand isolated but stands in line with the Singing Sisters of ancient world civilisations. They too have left behind a fund of ideas about creation couched in a code of symbolism of which the meaning remains to be discovered. Modern mind will have to grapple with the problem of the meaning of gods and goddesses in the mythologies of India, Iran, Greece, Rome, Egypt, Sumer, etc. Fortunately the stock of original meanings, like scintillating sparks from a great Fire, has received perfect preservation in the Indian Tradition. A great redeeming feature in favour of the Vedas and the Purāṇas is that they hold the key to the understanding of world mythology, a subject to which international scholarship today is gradually gravitating. If the divine Creator is one, if the Cosmos is one, then the human Mind also did have its source in a single Sub-Conscious, whose intimations received in many idioms are characterised by an underlying unity. With this faith Vedic scholars have to approach the problem. The Creator conceived as the Giant Bird (*Vāyasaṁ Bṛihantaṁ*), singing divine notes, with flapping wings (*Divyaṁ Suparṇaṁ*) is a theme of which the Truth will remain the same for the discoveries of philosophy and science. Scholars from many lands will have to listen to this Voice of Thousand Syllables--

SAHASRĀKSHARĀ VĀK.

The only approach which can help us with consistent meaning and rational explanation of the words of the Ṛig Vedic Mantras was in ancient terminology known as (*paroksha*), the esoteric way (*parokshapriyā iva hi devā bhavanti pratyakshadvishaḥ*, GB. 1.1.7); e.g. *Akshara* is semantically derived from *Akshaya*, the inexhaustible one (*iti parokshamāchakshate*, JUB. 1.24.2); Agni is derived from *Agri*, being the primeval principle of creation (*agrirha vai tamagnirityāchakshate paroksham*, ŚB. 6.1.1.11). By means of hundreds of such semantic etymologies we are led to the inner meaning of words. The other technique is that of symbolism pure and simple, known as *nidāna*; e.g. the Cow as the symbol of Motherhood or creative generation or of infinite nature or of *Vāk* for which there is first-hand authority and ample material in the Ṛig Veda itself; e.g. *dhenur vāg asmān upa sushṭutaitu*, RV. 8.100.11. This basic material was amplified in many ways in the Brāhmaṇas. The present attempt to probe into the meaning of the Asya Vāmīya Sūkta is based on the approach of the *Nidāna Vidyā*, and the *Paroksha-priya* way.

We may take one example, namely, *Vāk* that is Speech in its simplest meaning. But in the Brāhmaṇas multifold meanings or significations have been recorded; e.g. *Vāk* as *Prajāpati* (ŚB. 5.1.5.6); as *Prāṇa-patnī*, consort of *Prāṇa* (Shaḍviṁśa,

2.9); as Cow (GB. 1.2.21; RV. 8.100.11); as Sarasvatī (ŚB. 7.5.1.3); as the Ocean (Tāṇḍya, 7.7.9); as the Thousand (*Sāhasrī*, SB. 4.5.8.4); as Sāvitrī (JUB. 4.27.15); as *Sarpa-Rājñī*, Queen of *Sarpas* or *Lokas* (KB. 27.4); as *Suparṇī*, Great Bird (ŚB. 3.6.2.2); as *Śatapadī*, the Hundred-footed One (Shaḍviṁśa, 1.4) as *Revatī* (ŚB. 3.8.11.12); as *Pathyā Svasti* (ŚB. 3.2.3.8); as *Dhishaṇā*, Intellect (ŚB. 6.5.4.5); as *Mati*, Thought (ŚB. 8.1.2.7); as *Bṛihatī*, the Comprehensive One, (ŚB. 14.4.1.22); as *Pṛithivī* (AB. 5.33); as *Antariksha* (JUB. 4.22.11); as *Dyauḥ* (JUB. 4.22.11); as *Lokaṁ-pṛiṇā*, World-filling Brick (ŚB. 8.7.2.7); as the Universal (*Virāṭ*, ŚB. 3.5.1.34); as the All-Friend (*Viśvā-Mitra*, KB. 10.5); as the Universe-fashioning Ṛishi (*Viśvakarmā Ṛishi*, ŚB. 8.1.29); as *Anushṭup* Metre (AB. 1.28); as Queen (*Mahishī*, ŚB. 6.5.3.4); as *Rig Veda* (ŚB. 14.4.3.12); as *Brahman* (ŚB. 2.1.4.10); as *Brahmā* (TB. 3.9.5.5.; RV. 1.164.35); as the Auspicious Brahma doctrine (Su-*Brahmaṇya*, AB. 6.3); as Chant (*Uktha* Shaḍviṁśa, 1.5); as Recitation (*Śastra*, AB. 3.44); as Cosmic Chariot (*Rathantara*, AB. 4.28; for meaning of *Rathantara*, see comm. on Mantra 25); as the Fashioner of Forms (*Tvashṭā*, AB. 2.4); as the Fiery Horse named *Dadhyaṅn Ātharvaṇa* (ŚB. 6.4.2.3); as the Infinite (*Arbuda*, TB. 3.8.16.3); as Glory (*Bharga*, ŚB. 12.3.4.10); as the Transcendent Navel or Centre (*Uttara Nābhi*, ŚB. 4.3.1.16); as Shelter (*Śarma*, AB. 2.40); as the Inviolable Pot (*Adābhya Graha*, ŚB. 11.5.9.1); as *Indra* (KB. 2.7); as *Agni* (TB. 3.10.8.4); as *Yajña* (AB. 2.34); as the Priest (*Hotā*, ŚB. 1.5.1.21); as Triadic (*Tryāvṛit*, Tāṇḍya, 10.4.6); as Thunderbolt (AB. 2.21); as Deity (*Deva*, GB. 1.2.10); as Seed (*Retas*, ŚB. 1.5.2.7); as Womb (*Yoni*, AB. 2.38); as Mind of Gods (*devānāṁ manotā*, AB. 2.10); as Year (*Saṁvatsara*, Tāṇḍya, 10.12.7); as the All-Healer (*Sarvaṁ Bheshajam*, ŚB. 7.2.4.28); as the Woman (*Strī*, JUB. 4.22.11; *Yoshā*, 1.4.4.4; ŚB.) etc.

The above meanings of *Vāk* cannot be ignored merely as *arthavāda*, but they form essential elements of the comprehensive doctrine of *Vāg-Vidyā*.

We find here an invitation to a new approach of Vedic Interpretation, viz. in terms of Doctrines or *Vidyās*, i.e. approaches to cosmogonical formulations. The Ṛig Veda is essentially a Treasure-Chest of many such Doctrines. The Vedic Seers desired to explain the working of the Cosmos on several levels, viz. in terms of the different manifestations of the divine powers (*Adhidaivata*); workings on the plane of Matter(*Adhibhūta*); functions in the human body(*Adhyātma*); details in the ritual which was intended to explain the other modalities (*Adhiyajña*); working of the three entities of Mind, Life and Matter on the biological plane as Father, Mother and Babe (*Adhi-praja*); in terms of the spatial extensions also signifying the integration and interdependence of the Immortal world of Prāṇa and the mortal world of Matter (*Adhiloka*); and finally in terms of the doctrine of *Lokas* or transcendent knowledge which in

itself is the highest fruit of all wisdom and the *summum bonum* of man's life and activity (*Adhividya*). These points of view inevitably lead to a number of complex *Vidyās* which are referred to in the Saṁhitās, Brāhmaṇas, Āraṇyakas and Upanishads. Some of these *Vidyās* have been listed above as illustrative of the vast Vedic metaphysical world.

The Asya-Vāmīya Hymn is no doubt worded in the language of ancient symbolism, but if put in simple terms, it gives us valuable data of cosmogonical principles which are of essential value for modern philosophy and science; e.g.

(1) It inculcates the Trinitarian Basis of Creation that the whole world is constituted of a triadic pattern. There are many formulations of the threefold constituents, all under the general name of Three Brothers. We have shown them during the course of this commentary. The most important of them all for modern man is the statement in terms of Mind, Life and Matter, corresponding to *Manas*, *Prāṇa* and *Vāk* of Vedic terminology. (Mantras 1-4).

(2) The principle of the two fundamental entities co-existing and originating from a common source, that is the Immortal and the Mortal, which in modern terms would mean the Twin Principles of Energy and Matter, corresponding to the worlds of Heaven and Earth. (Mantra 30 and 38).

(3) The formulation that the whole world of Time-Space relata is governed by the Wheel-principle or rhythmic cyclic motion about which science and philosophy are in agreement with respect to their explanations of cosmic dynamism. (Mantras 2, 3, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 48).

(4) The principle that the supreme characteristic of Mother Nature is the quality of infinite progenition and productivity, an idea expressed through the symbolism of the Universal Cow, Calf, Milk, Milker, Cowherd, and Milk-Boilers. Wherever Nature's provision for Life is processed, that is symbolised as the Milk-Pot of which each body is an exemplar on the three levels of men, animals and plants. Even the Cosmos is conceived of as a Boiler maintained at a certain degree of Heat or Temperature (*abhīddha gharma*, Mantra 26).

(5) The most important principle about the manifestation of Life (*Jīva*) in Matter, or the emergence of the Baphometic Fire called *Prāṇāgni* from the Universal Ocean of the First Cause (Mantras 47, 51 and 52).

(6) The principle of *Animus* and *Anima*, half-male and half-female, i. e. the *Ardhanārīśvara* doctrine as the root-cause of biological manifestation (Mantras, 16, 33).

(7) Sun as the centre of an orderly cosmic system, and the whole world as a garment enveloping the centre, conceived of as Cloth woven with Seven-Threads

(*Sapta-Tantu Yajña*, Mantra 5), symbolising the warp and woof of Mind, Life and the Five Elements of Matter.

(8) The principle of the Universal and the Individual and of their inter-relationship (Mantra 34 and 35).

(9) The principle that whatever exists in the manifest cosmos also exists in the unmanifest source, call it by any name we will, so that the potential and the kinetic, the cause and the effect vie with each other and are mutually energising.

(10) The doctrine of the *Logos* or *Vāk*, transcendent and infinite as the Thousand-syllabled (*Śahasrākshara*) and finite as Speech in the form of uttered syllables. It includes within its fold the elaborate doctrine of the cosmos as the Thought or Mind of its Creator, and is the same as the statement that the Creation is the Thought-construct of its Maker. The world of ideas is real and descends to the level of manifest concrete world.

These are some of the truths which science and philosophy have discovered and modern mind accepts as fundamentals of its metaphysical knowledge.

The Asya Vāmīya Hymn of Ṛishi Dīrghatamas, outstanding as it is, is in no way isolated but forms an integral part of the Vedic philosophical system, as the present commentary amply demonstrates. A close study of its Mantras leads us imperceptibly to the orbit of many other doctrinal formulations, so that the mind comes to discover the essential unity of the whole system. The evidence relevant to what has been said in this one Hymn is extensive and needs an organised presentation. Many minds are required to participate in such a building up of Vedic exegesis, which has value, not because it is Indian, but because it belongs to all mankind.

I had entertained an idea to write a commentary on the Asya Vāmīya Sūkta several years ago. It was specially quickened after reading the Foreword of Sri Sampurnanandaji to Dr. Kunhan Raja's edition of the Asya Vāmasya Hymn in which he says: "This very important piece of philosophical literature deserves the closest study. Many of the Mantras it contains are widely quoted in our later philosophic literature, e.g. the Mantra '*Dvā Suparṇā*', or '*Chatvāri Vāk*', or '*Ṛicho Akshare*'. Many of the questions which Dīrghatamas postulates, e. g. *Ko dadarśa prathamaṁ jāyamānam*: who saw the Universe when it first came into existence ? Or, *Pṛichchhāmi tvā paramantaṁ pṛithivyāḥ*. I ask you where is the limit of this universe ? Where is its focal point ? Which is the place of the supreme sound ?—have been the subject-matter of philosophy and metaphysics all down the ages and will continue to be so, so long as mankind studies philosophy. Quite obviously, this Ṛishi has not contented himself merely with asking questions. He has given answers also from his own

spiritual experience. But these answers are difficult to understand. *They are clothed in language which it is diffiicult to pierce.* (Italics mine).......the greater part of these statements made by Dīrghatamas have been couched in *samādhi bhāshā*, i.e. symbolic language.......I hope that other scholars will devote attention to this Sūkta and give us a coherent account in consonance with the Vedic thought and Indian philosophical tradition." (Asya Vāmasya Hymn by Dr. Kunhan Raja, Foreword, pp. vi-vii).

Even in his latest letter to me dated 8th October, '63, he writes : "I am much pleased that you have taken up the Asya Vāmīya Sūkta in hand. It is a matter of regret that this Hymn has not been properly studied upto now. What you style as *Parokshaṁ āchakshate*, viz. the esoteric statements, does not receive attention."

I wish to express my grateful thanks to those from whom I have derived help in writing this *Uru Jyoti* commentary. My foremost indebtedness is to Mahā-Mahopādhyāya Paṇḍita Madhusūdana Ohjhā and his disciple Paṇḍita Motilal Śāstri of Jaipur, my teacher in Veda. The voluminous Vedic writings of these two savants are monumental edifices of Vedic interpretation. I am also obliged to Griffith and Wilson whose English translations of the Asya Vāmīya Hymn I have used and quoted in full as footnotes accompanying the Mantras. They show that in interpreting the Vedic hymns one need not much depart from the meanings given by earlier scholars, but what is essential is to approach the problem from a different stand-point. I am also thankful to Dr. Kunhan Raja whose edition of Ātmānanda's commentary I have had before me, although I confess that I could not make much use of it, as the same is cast in a mould of thought which I considered as a subsequent development of Indian philosophy, at least in its terminology, if not in essence.

I have much joy in expressing thanks to Sri Shuddhanandaji who worked with me all these days in preparing the manuscript. I am also glad to acknowledge the debt of Sri Rāma Ādhār Pāṭhak, Ramji Pandey and of my son Pṛithivī Kumar for assistance in reading the proofs, owing to my eye trouble. My deep obligation is due to Sri Shiv Kumar Gupta and Sri Ramesh Chandra Sathi who gave to me line drawings, mostly taken from the Varansasi School of Sculpture flourishing at Sarnath during the Golden Age of the Guptas. I have selected them to illustrate the many ideas propounded in the Mantras, which seem to have been embedded in the racial sub-conscious and risen from there to fill the forms of lithic sculpture with eloquent statement of ideas. Sri Shiv Kumar Gupta also joyfully took upon himself the heavy burden of seeing the book and the illustrations through the Press and has taken devoted pains to do the work as a self-imposed

duty. My blessings to him. I also express my obligation to the Proprietor of Shri Bhargava Bhushan Press and his able Staff who have produced this work in about a month's time.

The Fourth Vedic Seminar in the Banaras Hindu University from November, 1 to November 18, 1963, gave me an occasion to prepare this commentary so as to use it as a Text-Reader for discourses at the Seminar. I know that the Vedic meanings are a tough subject and need constant effort on the part of learners to become familiar with them, but I hope that this may prove of some real benefit to them.

I close with my homage to the ancient Ṛishis who were like Dīrghatamas Path-Finders into these Mysteries :

नम ऋषिभ्यः पूर्वजेभ्यः पूर्वेभ्यः पथिकृद्भ्यः ।

Banaras Hindu University
Nov. 1, 1963.
[शरत् पूर्णिमा, संवत् २०२०]

Vasudeva S. Agrawala

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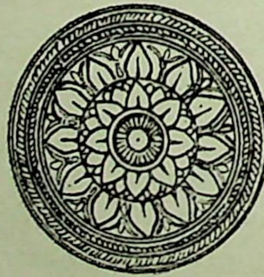
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VISION IN LONG DARKNESS

[दीर्घतमस्]

I. VISION IN LONG DARKNESS

OR

THE ASYA-VĀMĪYA SŪKTA OF ṚISHI DĪRGHATAMAS

[*Ṛigveda* 1. 164.1-52]

The long darkness means the mystery of creation. It is the great secret of which the total understanding is veiled. It has ever remained a Question, an everlasting sign of interrogation (*Saṁpraśna*; RV. 10.82.3). All visible worlds are like solutions to the Eternal Question, ever present in effective concrete form, for decipherment by the mind of man. But whatever be the amount of knowledge obtained about the mystery it has not yet sufficed to lift the veil or to close the gaping doors of the Eternal Question. The leaking bucket of the human mind has not been able to empty the well of Truth and when will be able to gauge its unfathomable depths is not known. Like the shy maiden, Nature hides Her youthful face from Man. Who knows ? Who can tell ? (*ko addhā veda* ? *ka iha pra vochat* ? RV. 10.129.6). What is the source of Creation (*kuta ājātā kuta iyaṁ visṛishṭiḥ*) ? Mind is being rocked in a swing of scepticism and belief. It is being measured in the scales of the known and the unknown. The Daughters of Heaven, as the Ṛig Veda says (3. 1.6), are half-revealed and half-concealed (*avasānā anagnāḥ*). Revelation is vision and concealment is mystery. There is a standing invitation for probing into the dark secrets of the Unknown Regions. The enquiring human mind, whether of old or of our times, is each a type of Ṛishi Dīrghatamas, who is first and last a Seer. He is firstly a Seer of the visible world built on secure foundations, and then becomes a Seer in the Long Darkness and therefore rightly named Dīrghatamas. Indeed each individual is endowed with the third eye of wisdom (*Prajñā-netro'yaṁ lokaḥ*); it is the higher faculty of intuiting the Truth of the Cosmos and its Source by direct perception, or as they say, 'non-mediate apperception' (*parokshena*).

Dīrghatamas, no doubt a human Ṛishi in the age of the Ṛig Veda, stands as the prototype of all the enquiring minds of the world of philosophy and science. Each one of them is called upon to formulate an answer to the mystery of Creation, according to the power of his mind or his vision in this Darkness. The Hymn 1. 164 in the Ṛig Veda comprised of 52 stanzas is named '*Asya Vāmīya*' from its two initial

words, meaning 'Of This Beautiful One', namely, the Cosmos manifesting in Time and the Life-Principle incarnating again and again. It is at one and the same time young and old, modified by the flux of Time and also beyond it. It has been recognised by modern interpreters of the Ṛig Veda that it is an obscure Hymn, elliptical in style and tending towards mystical statements in the form of riddles.

Dr. Kunhan Raja, who is the latest translator of this Sūkta, writes about it : 'This is one of the most interesting and important hymns in the whole range of the Vedic literature. It is without a parallel in the Vedas. It is highly philosophical ; most of the philosophical ideas are found here as basis for later thoughts of India. It is full of mysticism. It is obscure. It is mainly in the form of a riddle, it was originally meant as a riddle and it has become a more insoluble riddle for us than for the people of those ancient days. The background is gone. We do not know what the author had in his mind when he composed these lines. He must have presumed that the people of those days understood him, the thinking section of the people. Various notions and symbols current in those days are now lost to us, and so we do not have the necessary apparatus to work up the full and precise meaning of the lines in this poem.'

Shri Sampurnanandaji in his Foreword to Kunhan Raja's edition says that the greater part of the statements made by Dīrghatamas has been couched in *Samādhi-Bhāshā*, i.e. symbolic language. According to him, quite obviously, there are a number of questions asked by the Ṛishi in the stanzas to which he has also given answers from his own spiritual experience, but his answers are difficult to understand, since they are clothed in language which is difficult to pierce. In his view rightly the hymn merits attention to give us a coherent account in consonance with Vedic thought and Indian philosophical tradition.

Wilson observes : "according to Sāyaṇa, however, the general purport of this Sūkta is the inculcation of the doctrines of the Vedānta, or the spiritual unity of Brahmāṇḍa, the Universe : some passages occur that bear him out in this view, but the text, upon the whole, although often mystical and obscure, evidently proposes the glorification of Āditya, or the Sun, specially as identifiable with all creation."

Geldner considers the hymn to be of the class of Brahmodya Sūktas, containing the reactions of the author to wonders of Nature and human life, speculations about time in an allegorical and mystical style, invoking also the ritual terminology.

Accroding to Keith, the assertion of the unity of the gods and of the worlds is made with emphasis in the hymn attributed to Dīrghatamas, "who develops at

much length the riddle of the universe. The form of the long hymn of 52 verses is remarkable and characteristic. It is a feature of the Vedic sacrifice that at certain points are found *Brahmodya* discussions about Brahman, the holy powers in the universe. Such theosophical riddles are specially common at the Horse-sacrifice, and are often of simple enough kind : one priest asks, 'What is it that doth move alone ? What is ever born again ? What is the remedy of cold ? and, What is the great Pile ?' The answers here are obvious enough, and are given as the Sun, the Moon, the Fire, and the Earth, respectively. In this long hymn of Dīrghatamas, we have a great series of riddles, but there is to be seen in them some degree of cohesion, the influence of the doctrine of the unity of the world. It is frankly expressed as regards the gods in one verse : ' they call it Indra, Varuṇa, Mitra, Agni, and the Winged Bird (Sun) : the one they call by many names, Agni, Yama and Mātariśvan'. The same idea appears more expressly still in another verse, where the poet asks the wise to tell him what supported the six regions of the universe, who was the first unborn being. The hymn is of a special further value in that it foreshadows one of the most common ideas of the philosophy of the Vedas, the identity of the sacrifice and the world : The seven priests of the earth are paralleled by seven in the heaven, the speech on earth by that in the heaven, there are also the earthly and the heavenly metres, the earthly *pravargya* rite and the rain from heaven, the animal-offering and Bull-sacrifice of the gods, the altar and the end of the earth, the sacrifice itself, and the navel of the world, and the Soma on earth and the rain." (A. B. Keith: The Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and Upanishads, pp. 434-435).

It should be stated at the outset that Wilson, Geldner, Keith, Griffith, and other scholars, who have grappled with this hymn, have so far on their own admission, failed to extract its full meaning and had to remain content by declaring it as obscure and unintelligible. Whatever may be said about the mystical nature of the style and of the metaphysical cogitations contained in the verses, this particular *Asya Vāmīya Hymn* is not different from many other hymns of the Ṛig Veda and as such its author, Ṛishi Dīrghatamas, really wanted to convey some definite meaning or his ideas about the creation of the cosmos. He has done so by taking recourse to a style that was quite common and a terminology that was well understood. He cannot be said to be obscure, and to his contemporaries his meaning must have been transparent with referenece to the cosmogonical doctrines with which they were familiar. If that background of Vedic thought is recaptured, we would be doing justice to the Ṛishi in understanding his true meaning. We would then see how unjustified it is to level the charge of obscurity against an author of such profound mastery over his facts and of unique competence to convey them with such compactness and brevity.

He often rises to the highest levels of inspiration and an ecstasy of thought which only comes from direct experience of spiritual truths.

What the Ṛishi has done in this hymn of 52 verses should be clearly understood. His single purpose is to bring together a number of Vedic doctrines about cosmogony which, in one word, we may say, was *Sṛishṭi Vidyā*. He has by choice employed the whole gamut of Vedic ideas about the cosmos and its creation and has adopted a symbolical language, constituted by the entire alphabet of the many *Vidyās* or lores relating to the gods (*Deva-vidyā*), metres (*Chhando-vidyā*), time (*Saṁvatsara-vidyā* or *Kālachakra-vidyā*), the Universal Cow (*Virāj-vidyā*), Two Birds (*Suparṇa-vidyā*), Speech (*Vāk-vidyā*), the Upper and the Lower (*Parāvara-vidyā*), the Indestructible One (*Akshara-vidyā*), Heated Boiler (*Gharma-vidyā*), Father-Mother Principle (*Pitṛi-Mātṛi-vidyā* or *Dyāvā-Pṛithivī-vidyā*), Sacrifice (*Yajña-vidyā* or *Saptatantu-vidyā*) and several others.

Now any one will admit that these are not isolated doctrines or in any manner exclusive to the *Asya Vāmīya* Hymn, but they form an integral part of Vedic philosophy as a whole. If we understand one, we will certainly know the meaning of the other. The Sūkta has obtained a pre-eminent place amongst the Hymns of the Ṛig Veda, partly by its length and partly by the boldness and unsparing effort of style at a sustained higher level. We should, therefore, approach the philosophical hymn of Dīrghatamas with a restored confidence that his words are meaningful, relevant in the context in which they have been used, and all directed to building a consistent thought-picture and distinguished by a rare joy and freshness of inspiration.

Analysis of the Hymn

Mantra 1—It explains the symbolism of the Three Brothers of Agni, who, as Śaunaka, Yāska and Sāyaṇa explain, are the three Fires, Agni, Vāyu and Āditya, invoking the basic triadic foundation of the cosmos which is the bedrock of the Indian metaphysical tradition.

Mantras 2-3—They refer to the imagery of the cosmos and the human body, conceived as a moving Chariot (*Ratha*), an idea taken up often in subsequent literature. The ancillary ideas of the Horse, Wheel, Pathway, Person or Persons stitting in the Car, Seven singing Sisters making music for the Moving Car are invoked.

Mantra 4—The creation and its First Cause are conceived as the Bony and the Boneless, with a very important and rare mention of the three principles of Asu (Prāṇa) Asṛik (Blood, i. e. life-sap secreted in matter), and Ātman (Mind).

Mantra 5—It refers to the entry of the Gods in the cosmos seen in the Seven Threads of the Cosmic Garment which is Yajña, woven in each year, or the Turning

Wheel of Time, symbolically expressed as the Unit of Time represented by the Calf weaned from the Mother Cow, which is about twelve months or the year.

Mantra 6—It refers to the doctrine of *Ekam*, something mysterious and the emanation of six *Rajāṁsi* or *Lokas* from that central fixed point, in short the Vedic *Dik-vidyā*.

Mantra 7—Doctrine of the Beautiful Sun-Bird and His Cows, the Rays which drink water from the earth and yield milk of heaven.

Mantra 8—It refers to the bifurcation of the two principles of Father and Mother, indispensable for cosmic progenition, which takes place in the region of Ṛita or in the Primeval Ocean. It implies the splitting of the Golden Egg into two halves, the Male and the Female.

Mantra 9—refers to the principle of Motherhood and the Babe, borne in each womb, wherever the youthful daughters of the eternal Mother exist. The Calf walks three steps with the Cow and obtains knowledge of the omniform cosmic Egg (*Viśva-rūpya*), which symbolism will be explained in the commentary later.

Mantra 10—It gives the cosmological picture of the Three Mothers and Three Fathers supported on *Ūrdhva*, all these being symbolical terms. It is a reference to the *Sapta-Lokas*, also called *Sapta-Dhāmas*.

Mantra 11—It refers to the Wheel of Time with twelve spokes, revolving undecayed round the heaven of Ṛita, with its 720 sons, each a pair (*ahorātra*).

Mantra 12—refers to Father Time as five-footed and having twelve faces, becoming visible with seven wheels and six spokes.

Mantra 13—takes the same imagery of the Time-wheel revolving with five spokes and bearing the load of all the worlds, never becoming hot-axled, nor its hub ever disrupting.

Mantra 14—refers to the imagery of the decayless Time-Wheel revolving for ever on its felly, to which are yoked the ten Coursers, the Wheel deriving its power from the principle of *Rajas* or Movement, stated to be the Eye of Sūrya or its activity on the conscious world.

Mantra 15—refers to the doctrine of the seven Prāṇic Ṛishis (*devajā ṛishayaḥ*), six of whom are in pairs (*sākañja*, ears, eyes, nostrils) and the seventh single (*ekaja*, the tongue.)

Mantra 16—refers to the important doctrine of *Ardhanārīśvara* or *Nara-Nārī Vapuḥ*, saying that each male is half-female and each female is half-male, what in modern psychology is known as the *Animus* and *Anima* principle.

Mantra 17—refers to the *Para* and *Avara* principles between which stands the cosmic Cow, Universal Mother Nature, with her Calf Sūrya, tied to her leg. Her conception and delivery take place in the pastures of heaven which are beyond (*parārdha*). The One transcendent Cow is contrasted with other cows, each of which gives birth to a world order, which together make up the herd.

Mantra 18—refers to the Father that is the Creator of the Cosmos conceived somewhere between *para* and *avara*. He is identified with the Divine Mind (*Devam-Manaḥ*) whose source is unknown to all the poets of the world.

Mantra 19—like the previous two Mantras, refers to the constant inter-communication between the two world orders of *Para* and *Avara*, the former belonging to Indra and the latter to Soma and both moving by the power of *Rajas* (Motion).

Mantra 20.—this and the following two Mantras state the doctrine of *Suparṇa*, which has a very wide connotation in the Vedic symbolical language. This imagery of the Universal Soul and the Individual Soul perched on the same Cosmic Tree, the one tasting its berries and the other only a silent spectator, is familiar in the Upanishads and the later systems of philosophy.

Mantra 21—The imagery of the synod of priests singing hymns of praise is transferred to an assembly of birds chirping each morning on their roosting trees and praying for their share of *Amṛitam*, the immortal essence called *Prāṇa* or the life-principle. The transcendent Creator of the Universe whose Ray Divine is present in each centre is mentioned as the objective of adoration or songs.

Mnatra 22—refers to the honey-eating birds, i.e. individual souls perching and breeding on the Cosmic Tree, where *Madhu* is the symbol of *Amṛitam* or *Prāṇa*, which is the most delectable sweetness.

Mantra 23.—This and the two following Mantras are based on the Vedic doctrine of metres (*Chhando-Vidyā*),i.e. *Gāyatrī*, *Trishṭup* and *Jagatī* which represent the rhythm of the cosmos. A distinction is made between *Gāyatrī* and *Gāyatra*, the former referring to the principle of matter and the latter to the *prāṇic* vibration underlying it and coming from an eternal source which is called *Amṛitam*. The same is true for Trishṭup and Jagatī.

Mantra 24—refers to the 'measuring out of life in the material centre or on earth, symbolised as the small *Arka* plant in accordance with the *Gāyatra* chant or rhythm. It further refers to the doctrine of *Akshara* by which the seven metres or the sevenfold rhythm of creation is being produced.

Mantra 25—refres to the *Rathantara Sāman* and by implication to the pair Sāman called Bṛihat and how the two interact on each other. The span of life is

conceived as a session of Yajña in which the three fuel-sticks of the *Gāyatra Prāṇa* burn in succession like a three-staged rocket, and their form manifests as boyhood, youth and old age.

Mantra 26.—This and the three following Mantras deal with the Vedic doctrine of the Cow, who symbolises the principle of Motherhood or Universal Nature or Infinity whose Milk is the sustenance of all creatures.

A skilled milker gets her best milk and the same is boiled in the milk-pot, *Gharma*, which is a ceremony in the ritual known as *Mahāvīra* or *Pravargya*.

Mantra 27—refers to the Cow yearning for the Calf, the Cow being the mother of Vasus, and giving milk for the two Aśvins or the principles of Prāṇa and Apāna.

Mantra 28—repeats the same idea but invoking the principle of measuring out and referring to the sniff-kiss of the cow on the head of her calf.

Mantra 29—refers to the birth of the Cow or Infinite Nature by the sneezing of the Creator, where ' Sneezing ' signifies spontaneous sudden ejection of the pent-up Prāṇic force. The process of creation is a ' *Sphoṭa* ', literally an explosion of the Prāṇic nucleus into infinite radiations. The cosmos is factually a ' bursting ' of an unknown fixed centre. The Cow is compared to *Vidyut*, a lightning streak which strips off her covering robe and by her shrill thundering cries creates all men. It refers to the manifestation of forms through *Nāma* and *Rūpa* respectively.

Mantra 30—refers to the two principles of animate life (*jīva*) and inanimate matter (*mṛita*) which exist together in a common womb (*amartyo martyenā sayoniḥ*).

Mantra 31—refers to the twofold movement (*Ā cha parā cha*) of the Cowherd which is Sūrya or Prāṇa, coming and going, like the swing of a pendulum, permeating all the worlds with such motion.

Mantra 32—refers to the doctrine of the Womb (*Yoni*) which is the symbol of Motherhood, which conceals all manifested forms (*bahuprajā*). That which is called Mahat or Virāj is the Great Womb of the Universal Mother.

Mantra 33—This Mantra makes the idea of the Womb more explicit by referring to the two Parents and their union to form a common *Yoni* or source of creation. Father (Svaymbhū) is mentioned as depositing his seed in his Daughter, i. e. Parameshṭhī or Mahat.

Mantra 34—is in the nature of a Brahmodya, putting four questions, viz. about the utmost extension of Pṛithivī or the Mahat Principle, secondly the Centre of fixity called *Nābhi*, thirdly the seed of the fecundating Stallion, and fourthly the highest station of Speech.

Mantra 35—formulates answers to the queries of Mantra 34. The altar in the Yajña is the symbol of Pṛithivī, the earth or the principle of Motherhood. Yajña is the centre of the universe, since it is the emergence of order from chaos under the regulating potency of a fixed centre. Soma is the Seed of the Stallion, the humidus radicle which is the germ of procreation. Brahmā the Superintending Preist represents the highest station of Vāk, which is *Anirukta*, like Prajāpati, i.e. *Tūshṇīm* or Silence, where all Speech has its ultimate source like the Vāk of the three Priests in Brahmā.

Mantras 34 and 35 also form part of the Brahmodya portions of Book 23 of Yajur-Veda (61-62 verses).

Mantra 36—explains the nature of the Cosmic Seed (*Bhuvanasya Retaḥ*) and its seven constituents (*Saptārdha-garbhāḥ*) and then refers to the dynamic principle of Movement which keeps the divine Ordinances in proper operation.

Mnatra 37—refers to the Vedic doctrine of individuation (*aham*), which emerges as so many points of consciousness in the midst of the primeval ocean; the latter is called Ṛita and the former is called *Ṛitasya Prathamajā*, which is *Aham*, the individual ego, or the same as '*Ahaṅkāra*' being produced from Mahat as in subsequent Sāṁkhya system.

Mantra 38—refers to the principle of *Svadhā* or Intrinsic Power behind creation which exists in its own right and regulates the working of the mortal and the immortal worlds on the one hand and of the twofold rhythm of the cosmic pendulum, on the other (*Apāna-Prāṇa*). The principle of *Svadhā* acts as the supreme controller (*Grabhaṇa*) which is the same as the *Akshara* with its *Praśāsana* in the Upanishads. The twofold idea in this Mantra has been already mentioned in Mantras 30 and 31, but the new doctrine of *Svadhā* is specially introduced here, which is also mentioned in the Nāsadīya Sūkta, RV. 10.129.2.

Mantra 39—brings us to the doctrine of *Akshara* which exists in the highest source as the root-cause of all motion and as the centre in which all the divine powers or energies of the cosmos abide, in which also are the Ṛiks or material manifestations of Speech, Vāk, as the *Pañcha-Bhūtas*. The truly learned members of the synod know this secret. This is Akshara-Vidyā, again referred to in Mantra 42.

Mantra 40—refers to the Cosmic Cow or Divine Nature, *Bhagavatī* who distributes her potency to all creatures, making them *Bhagavantaḥ*. The secret of her Bhaga lies in the fodder and the water that she assimilates to convert them into energy. Her name is *Aghnyā*, the inviolable Mother whose milk sustains the Aśvins or the Prāṇic and Apānic vibrations in each organic centre (cf. Mantra 27 above).

Mantra 41—introduces the very important doctrine of *Gaurī* or *Vāk* as *Gaurī* corresponding to the Logos which is in the Highest Empyrean as the Speech of thousand syllables, *Sahasrāksharā*, i.e. the Word of Infinite Meaning. It is symbolised as She-Bison (*Bos Gaurus*), an animal loving water and therefore typical of the Ocean of the Universal or the Ṛita of Parameshṭhī. The Buffalo stands for the region of Parameshṭhī, the Universal and the Cow for that of Sūrya or the individual centre or Yajña.

Mantra 42—refers to the two principles of Akshara and Kshara, i.e. Prāṇa and Matter, the one proceeding from the other.

Mantra 43—refers to the cooking of the Dappled Bull by the Heroes beyond the mid-point of heaven where in the distance smoking fire is visible. The Spotted Bull is Sūrya, the Heroes are the Maruts referring to the world-building forces. The cooking of the Bull is also referred to in Ṛig Veda 10.28.3. Why the Bull is called spotted (*Ukshā Pṛiśni*), we shall explain in the commentary.

Mantra 44—introduces a new doctrine, i.e. of Keśins, literally the 'Woolly Ones' of whom there are three, Agni, Vāyu and Āditya, appearing in the three seasons respectively.

Mantra 45—refers to the four-footed Vāk explained by all commentators in terms of *Parā*, *Paśyantī*, *Madhyamā* and *Vaikharī*, which implies that the later doctrine of Sphoṭa was inherent in the thought of the Ṛig Veda.

Mantra 46—is a well known statement about the unity of all Gods, the pantheistic approach characteristic of Vedic thought.

Mantra 47—refers to the Dark Regions of Varuṇa called *Kṛishṇa Niyāna* and *Ṛita-sadana* from which the Prāṇic birds, *Suparṇāḥ*, take their flight in space robed in the energy of the Primeval Flood. A rain of *Ghṛita* to fertilise the Earth is symbolical of the cosmic Seed of Agni that is fecundating the Mother-principle.

Mantra 48—is again a description of the Time-Wheel with twelve fellies or months and three navels which implies its three-concentric nature.

Mantra 49—refers to Goddess Sarasvatī, the deity of the Primeval Flood, manifesting herself in the cosmos as the female energy of the Creator whose milk sustains all.

Mantra 50—is taken from Ṛig Veda 10.90.16. The two Yajñas mentioned here are on the level of the transcendent or *Sādhya devas* and of the *Ājānaja devas*, the immanent ones, i.e. pure Prāṇic powers and the Prāṇas manifesting in matter, i.e. *amṛitam* and *martya*, respectively.

Mantra 51—the idea is based on the cyclic nature of the Cosmic Wheel—*Brahmāṇḍa Chakra*—which circulates like the waters of the earth ascending to the sky by the power of heat and then coming down by the effect of cold. These two principles are referred to as the Days which stand for *Ahorātra*, the unit of day and night, symbolising the two aspects of the Revolving Wheel. The two principles of Heat and Cold or Fire and Water, are mentioned as Agni and Parjanya, i.e. the Plutonian and Neptunist Rhythms.

Mantra 52—refers to the Divine Bird, son of Waters, present in all plants. It is a symbolical description of Agni.

The above analysis of the hymn shows its comprehensive character in dealing with a number of important Vidyās in the Ṛig Veda, each of which would need an extended study to take note of the full evidence available. In the following commentary, we propose to present the translations of Wilson (who follows Sāyaṇa) and Griffith, and also to give our interpretation of the meaning and symbolism contained in each Mantra.

Deities of the Hymn

According to the existing record in the *Sarvānukramaṇikā*, the deity for the Mantras 1-41 is *Viśvedevāḥ* which can only reasonably be taken to mean that no particular deity can be pointed out, but the general recognition of a *devatā* as appropriate to or indicated by each Mantra, e.g. the deity of Mantra 1 can only be Agni as the Hotṛi Priest whose Three Brothers are described in a symbolical language. Similarly the deity for Mantras 2 and 3 can only be the *Ratha*. In Mantra 4 the Bony and the Boneless in relation to each other are the objects of description and appear to be the deity of the Mantra. In Mantra 5 *Sapta-Tantu Yajña* is the deity. In Mantra 6 *Ekam* or *Aja*, the Unborn Creator is the deity. In Mantra 7 there is reference to a Beautiful Bird (*Vāmasya Veḥ*) which should be the deity. Mantras 8-10 refer to the two World-Parents who obviously are the deities. Mantras 11-14 refer to the *Kāla Chakra* also described in Mantra 48, which seems to be the deity as *Saṁvatsara-Chakra* for all of them. For Mantra 15 the deity is the Deva-born Seven Ṛishis. For Mantra 16 the deity is *Strī-Pumān* or what in later language is known as *Nara-Nārī-Vapus*. For Mantras 17-19 the deity is *Bhāva-Vṛittam* or the Parāvara Doctrine of cosmogony. For Mantras 20-22 the deity is *Suparṇa*. For Mantras 23-25 the deity is the Metres. For Mantras 26-29 the deity is the Cow. In Mantra 30 the deity is *Jīva*; in 31 it is *Gopā*, the Cowherd. Mantras 32 and 33 have *Mātā* and *Pitā* as their deities, same as in Mantras 8-10.

Mantras 34-35 are in the nature of questions and answers (*Brahmodya*) which have their deities indicated in each line of the Mantra (*Liṅgoktā devatāḥ*). Mantra 36 has *Bhuvanasya Retaḥ* as the deity and Mantra 37 the First-Born of the Holy Order, *Ṛitasya Prathamajā* as the deity. Mantra 38 from its description shows *Martyāmartya*

sayonitā, the common birth of the immortal and the mortal, is the deity, the same as that of Mantra 30. *Akshara* is the deity of Mantra 39 and *Aghnyā* of Mantra 40. Mantra 41 has *Gaurī-Vāk* as deity and Mantra 42 *Kshara-Akshara* as deity.

The above list of deities, all comprised under the one word Viśvedevāḥ of the Sarvānukramaṇī, has been gleaned from the words of the Mantras themselves or the subjects treated therein. That this approach is right is indicated by the names of deities given for Mantras 42-52 by the author of the Anukramaṇikā. For example, Mantra 42 is the best example that this was the approved method for fixing the deity according to the ancient interpretation. Here four deities, viz. *Vāk, Samudra, Āpaḥ* and *Akshara* are given as the names of deities. Only two of them, i.e. *Samudra* and *Akshara* are present in the Mantra; the other two, i.e. *Vāk* and *Āpaḥ* have been gathered from the inherent meanings read by the exegetes in the stanza. The same could be said for verse 43 which has two deities, viz. Smoke of the Cow-dung Fire (*Śakamaya-dhūma*) and Soma, the former being named in the Mantra and the second only recovered on the basis of the meaning. The three Keśins of Mantra 44 as Agni, Vāyu and Sūrya, are again a matter of interpretation for determining the deity. For Mantras 46-47, although Sūrya is mentioned as the deity, it is highly problematical, for Sūrya may symbolically be accepted as the deity of the Mantra but in Mantra 47 Sūrya will have to be identified with the Golden Bird (*Harayaḥ Suparṇāḥ*) mentioned in the verse. The deities of Mantras 48-49 are clear, viz. the Revolving Wheel of Time as the Year (*Saṁvatsara Kāla*) and Sarasvatī respectively. For Mantra 50 the deity is *Sādhyā Devāḥ*, but it also occurs in 10.90.16 where the deity is Purusha and both seem to be correct from the different points of view of meaning of Devas and Yajña respectively. For Mantra 51, Sūrya and Agni with Parjanya between them are the deities. Mantra 52 is a typical case in which Sarasvān Ocean as deity is given in the text but the other, viz. Sūrya or the Sun God can only be derived from the interpretation of the Big Divine Bird as being the same as Sūrya. Thus it will be seen that the ancient exegesis was based on quite a liberal approach in which much latitude of thought was permitted provided it was in consonance with the spirit of the Ṛishi's thought. This elasticity of meaning reflected in the deities can only be explained or understood in the light of the symbolical interpetation where the meaning expands in a wider orbit to link itself with the several facets of the idea holding true at different levels.

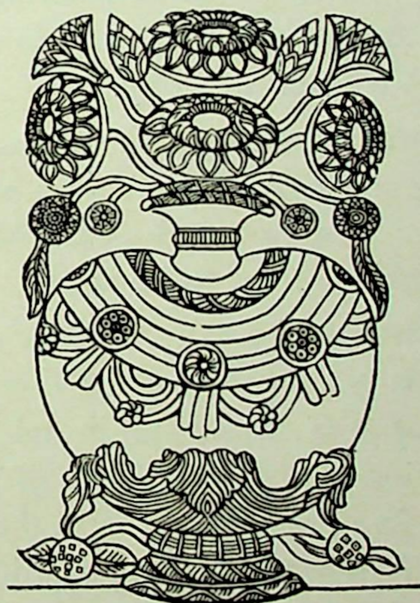
The question arises as to why there is no record of Devatās for the first set of 41 Mantras, whereas for the second set of 11, the deities are indicated. A cogent answer comes from the Aitareya Āraṇyaka stating that the *Asya Vāmīya Sūkta* consisted of only 41 Mantras (*Asya Vāmasya Palitasya Hoturiti salilasya Dairghatamasa ekachatvāriṁśatam*, AA. 5.3.2). According to this, the Sūkta began with the Mantra

containing the words '*Asya Vāmasya*' and ended with the Mantra having the word '*Salila*' as in verse 41. It is thus indicated on the basis of the highest authority that originally the Sūkta had only 41 stanzas for which a detailed record of deities was not available at the time of its compilation, and therefore a general non-committal label of *Viśvedevāḥ* was given by the redactor whosoever he was. The latter set of 11 Mantras represents a later stage of redaction as shown by the thought, as given in Mantra 46, some catch-words as Kshara and Akshara, some doctrines mentioned elsewhere as that of the *Keśins* found in RV. 10.13.1, cooking of the Spotted Bull as in RV. 10.28.3. The same fact explains why Mantra 48 is taken into this text, although out of place, as noticed by Griffith. A firm proof the eclectic nature of the compilation is given by the repetition of Mantra 50 from Ṛig Veda (10.90.16) where it is the *finale* in the thought of the *Purusha Sūkta*. Mantra 49 is almost like a portion of some classical Stotra to Goddess Sarasvatī resembling the famous Śrī-Sūkta which is apocryphal (*Khila*) to the Ṛig Veda.

Ātmānanda in his commentary has examined the question of deities in greater detail and to an extent more critically, e.g. about Mantra 51 he says that although Sūrya is given as the deity yet there is no mention of Sūrya in the Mantra and the subject also is different (*na cha Sūryo' tra pratipādyaḥ, tatra tannāmno' pyadarśanāt*). He refers to the commentaries of Skanda, Udgītha Bhāskara, to Saunaka's observations in the Bṛihad-devatā(4.31-42), to Kātyāyana's Anukramaṇikā and to a dialogue between Pushkara Yaksha and Rāma in Vishṇu-Dharmottara and says that the previous commentators have ignored these several points of view. He thinks that the approach of Skanda was '*adhiyajña*', of Nirukta '*adhidaivata*' and of Śaunaka '*adhyātma*', but he for himself has chosen the '*adhyātma*' approach (*adhyātmaṁ vakshyāmaḥ*), and therefore he has ascribed Ātman as its deity (*ātmadaivatam*). Sāyaṇa in his own way interprets the Sūkta in accordance with the Vedānta doctrine. Both are right in their own way, but the problem of interpreting the Asya Vāmīya Sūkta is basically different, viz. that we are face to face here with the numerous symbols, familiar to the Vedic Ṛishis, at the back of which there is a large amount of evidence in the Ṛig Veda and other Saṁhitās. True to the spirit of the Sūkta one should not ignore these meanings. It is problems of cosmogony which find multifarious statements in the Mantras and looking through the words, one is face to face with them. It is therefore incumbent to approach the Mantras without any preconceived notions and let them speak in a voice that has the support of the Ṛig Veda itself and not of any later system of philosophy, howsoever valuable it be. It is the basic approach to be followed in dealing with this Sūkta.

It should also be mentioned that there is hardly any scope for difference of opinion about the dictionary meanings of words. Our first problem is, therefore,

solved when we understand them in the prevailing lexical sense. When that is done the real problem forces itself, viz. the correlation of words with the consistent thought and meaning behind them. Often it is solving an obvious riddle, which in reality is pregnant with deep sense. The commentary offered here has this uncompromising approach, viz. not to import later ideas into the Sūkta but to insist upon understanding it in the light of Vedic cosmogony, or in other words, the interpretation of the Vedic symbolical language and statements in terms of Vedic metaphysics (*Sṛishṭi-vidyā*). There is hardly anything in the Sūkta which is not found elsewhere as part of the thought spread in the Ṛig Veda.



MANTRA 1

अस्य वामस्य पलितस्य होतुस्तस्य भ्राता मध्यमो अस्त्यश्नः ।
तृतीयो भ्राता घृतपृष्ठो अस्यात्रापश्यं विश्पतिं सप्तपुत्रम् ॥

—ऋ० वे० १।१६४।१॥

Of this young Priest and of that old Priest, there is a Middle Brother of voracious nature.

His Third Brother has butter on his back. Here I behold the Chief with Seven Sons[1].

Three Brothers of Agni

The Three Brothers of Agni are, as Sāyaṇa says, Agni, Vāyu, Āditya. Durgāchārya also on Yāska 2.4.26 takes the three brothers to be the triad of the three Devas, Agni, Vāyu, Āditya, a symbolism of very wide occurrence in Vedic literature and of basic significance for Vedic cosmogony.

Ātmānanda takes the Three Brothers as Vaiśvānara, Taijasa and Prājña, the controlling persons of the three states of consciousness, viz. *Jāgrat*, *Svapna*, *Sushupti*. Both are right in their own way, but the words of the Mantra require to be explained more factually and certain questions have to be faced.

Why should the First Brother be called *Vāma* and *Palita*, young and grey-haired at the same time ? What is the meaning of these two words ? Is it necessary to interpret *Palita* as *Pālayitā*, or, is Griffith right in taking it as 'eld grey-coloured' ? What is the syntactical connection of *Asya* and *Tasya*, of This and That, a point raised by Sāyaṇa but not answered ? Is *Aśna* to be taken in the sense of all-pervading or, as by Wilson, ' voracious eater ' ? What is the real significance of *ghṛita-pṛishṭha* and, why should the Third Brother be so called ? What does *Ghṛita* actually mean here, Water or Butter ? Who is this *Viśpati*, and why is he so called ? What is the real

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1. *Griffith*—Of this benignant Priest, with eld grey-coloured, the brother midmost of the three is lightning.

The third is he whose back with oil is sprinkled. Here I behold the chief with seven male children.

Wilson—I have beheld the Lord of Men with seven sons ; of which delightful and benevolent (deity), who is the object of our own invocation, there is an all-pervading middle brother, and a third brother, well fed with (oblations of) ghee.



Mantra 1—अग्नि　　　　Agni

meaning of *Sapta Putra*, Seven Sons ? And, who are they ? These questions force themselves upon us as if we stirred a nest of hornets and demand an answer which should satisfy both the dictionary meaning and the tradition of the Brāhmaṇas. The answer to these posers is set forth below.

The Fire invoked here is *Agni Vaiśvānara* which abides in each *Purusha* both on the cosmic plane and in the individual centre: *sa esha agnir vaiśvānaro yat Purushaḥ*, ŚB. 10.6.1.11. *Agni Vaiśvānara* on the human plane is the metabolic fire within the body which eats and digests food and which signifies Life itself (*ayam agnir vaiśvānaro yoyam antaḥ purushe yena idam annaṁ pachyate, yadidm adyate*, BU. 5.9.1). As the Gītā explains, *Vaiśvānara* is the twin principles of *Prāṇa* and *Apāna*, pulsating as the Life of all creatures. The Ṛig Veda also describes the *Vaiśvānara* in several hymns, e.g. 10.88 : "the *Devas* engendered *Agni Vaiśvānara* whom age never touches, the Ancient Star, that wanders on for ever, lofty and strong, Lord of Living Beings" (RV. 10.88.13). He is indentified with Sūrya having the form of Agni at night and of Sūrya at dawn. It is the same principle of Agni at two levels of microcosm and macrocosm. This Agni is said to be the Bright Banner of Creation, he is the guard of our bodies, *tanūpā*, whom the heavens and the earth know. The Ṛishi enquires : How many are the Fires and, how many the Suns ? (*katyagnayaḥ, kati Sūryāsaḥ*, 10.88.18). The reply is that the gods made Agni appear in threefold forms according to which he ripens plants of every description and nature. The Gods created him by their world-filling powers (*Devāso agnimajījanañchhaktibhī rodasīprām, tamū akṛiṇvan tredhā bhuve kaṁ sa oshadhīḥ pachati . viśvarūpāḥ*, RV. 10. 88.10). This three fold aspect of *Vaiśvānara* Fire is the same as the triad of the three gods, Agni, Vāyu and Āditya. These three brothers correspond to the three *Lokas*, *Pṛithivī*, *Antariksha* and *Dyauḥ*, which *Vaiśvānara Agni* has encompassed, RV. 1088.3. The intrinsic power (*Svadhā*) of *Agni Vaiśvānara* is that mysterious force which is the root of the manifested worlds and through which the Gods function so that the worlds may be upheld (*bhuvanāya dharmaṇe*) and sustained (*tasya bharmaṇe*, RV. 10.88.1). The trinitarian nature of Agni is indicated in the name *Vaiśvānara* itself as made explicit in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa—*sa yaḥ sa vaiśvānaraḥ, ime sa lokāḥ, iyameva pṛithivī viśvam agnir naraḥ, antarikshameva viśvaṁ vāyur naraḥ, dyaureva viśvam, āditya naraḥ*, ŚB. 9.3.1.3).

All other fires are like several aspects of *Vaiśvānara* which is the navel or the centre of all : *vaiśvānara nābhirasi kshitīnām*; and it is like a pillar supporting all, RV. 1. 59.1; and the immortal gods rejoice in him for he is the immortal essence amongst mortal men.

The Asya Vāmīya calls Agni a *Hotā* and the epithet 'Primeval Hotā' whom all the Gods accepted as such is found in the *Vaiśvānara Sūkra* also : *yo hotāsīt*

prathamo devajushṭaḥ. RV. 10. 88. 4. Each human body or any ordered system is the type of Yajña of which the chief priest is Agni.

The pair words 'This' and 'That' in the Mantra have not been clearly explained, although the question is raised by Sāyaṇa, who refers both '*Asya*' and '*Tasya*' to *Vāma* which is a forced construing. The fact is that '*Asya*' refers to '*Vāmasya*' and '*Tasya*' to '*Palitasya*'. The conjoint pair of This and That refers to two aspects of Agni, one which is young (*Vāma*) and the other which is old (*Palita*). The young Agni is the Life-principle on earth or in material manifestation, who is being renovated in each new birth : *navo navo bhavati jāyamānaḥ*, RV. 10. 85. 19. He is the young hero or the miraculous Boy called *Chitra Śiśu*, RV. 10. 1. 2; *adbhuta*, RV. 6. 15. 2. The eld greyhaired Hotā is the divine Agni on the immortal plane of heaven which as Sūrya is fixed and eternal and, therefore, called *Palita*. It is the single Agni both as Fire on earth and Sun in heaven; the one is in the custody of men and the other of the immortal Gods.

Vāma and *Palita* also have reference to what is known as *Vāmana* and *Virāt*, viz. the Dwarf and the Giant forms of the single deity Vishṇu. Ātmānanda actually explains *Vāma* as Dwarf (*kubjasya*). The secret is that manifested life in each centre is distinguished by the feature of Growth. It is a transformation of the Dwarf into a Giant by the process of Time-Space relata, both of which are three-fold as past, present, future or, earth, sky and heaven. The whole world is in a flux or subject to movement and that is the law of Growth applicable to each living centre. This is symbolised as the First Brother of Agni.

In explaining the Trivikrama legend, the Brāhmaṇa writers are conscious of the correspondence of *Vāmana* and *Vishṇu* : "*Vāmano ha Vishṇurāsa*, ŚB. 1. 2. 5. 5; *Sa hi Vaishṇavo yad vāmanaḥ*, ŚB. 5. 2. 5. 4. That which is *Vāmana* is beautiful and young (*yuvā kumāra*, RV. 1. 155. 6) and that which is *palita* or *Virāṭ* is called *Bṛihat Śarīra*, one having a cosmic body, RV. 1. 155. 6. The young Babe (*Vāma* or *Vāmana*) measures out his form by the three strides which symbolise movement and becomes cosmic in character. The unit of growth or measuring out dimensions is referred to as *Ṛikvan*, the intrinsic power of unfoldment by assimilating more and more rays of light (RV. 1. 155. 6, *vimimāna rikvabhiḥ*).

The First Brother of Agni is the principle of Growth symbolised as *Vāmana-Virāṭ*. Growth invariably implies a change from youth to elderliness, from a minute form to a vast form. In the scale of life we find the young boy at one end and the old man at the other, there being maintained a constant oscillation of forces between the two. They are virtually two sides of the same medal, being processed by the mysterious Chemistry of Time; moreover, each one of us is both young and

old at the same time, young as the centre in the *Hṛiddeśa* or by one's divine nature, and old towards the circumference, or in the waxing orbits of human existence.

Here then we get an insight into the symbolism of the Three Brothers: if one is the principle of Growth, the second is the law of assimilation and elimination expressed by the symbolism of hunger or of the eater of food and food. This is spoken of here as the Middle Brother, who is no other than Brahmā, the Pot-bellied God, corresponding to Vāyu of the mid air, who as Prāṇa consumes food and as air is absorbing water from all sources. That is his voracious form (*aśnaḥ anna-annāda rūpa*).

The third typical factor in the organisation of life is the capacity of reproduction or procreation. The Seed deposited in the womb of the Mother germinates, grows, fructifies and gives birth to another Seed like the original. Nature's perfect wisdom has created the plant, or the animal body or the human body as the means to reproduce the seed. The primeval seed (*pratna retas*) is repeating itself in each new generation and the chain continues for ever, each terminal link being joined to a new beginning. This feature of reproduction is symbolised as *Ghṛita* which is but another name of the Seed or *Retas* (*reto vā ājyam*, ŚB. 1. 3. 1. 18; *reto vai ghṛitam*, ŚB. 9. 2. 3. 44). This identity of *retas* and *ghṛita* was well known in Vedic thought (*retaḥ kṛitvājyaṁ devāḥ purushamāviśan*, AV. 11. 8. 29) and is particularly mentioned as the showers of globules of butter which started primeval generation (*saṁbhṛitaṁ pṛishadājyam*, RV. 10. 90. 8).

Virtually, the Third Brother is Sūrya who is dripping fat in the form of his radiations of heat and light and moistening or fecundating Mother Earth with his energy (*ghṛitena pṛithivī vyudyate*, RV. 1. 164. 47).

We may also look at it from the point of view of later mythology where Sūrya is the same as Rudra or Śiva who is the Lord of the principle of Kāma which is born of Mind, *Manasija*. Kāma is the deity of procreation, of love, of red hot passion which is essential to perpetuate life.

Here then we come to a point where the Three Brothers of Agni become part of the fundamental triadic pattern of the cosmos or of the trinitarian principle of creation. From the cosmogonical point of view, it is one and the same thing to speak of them as Three Fires, (*Agni tretā*) or the Three Devas or the Three Lokas or the three Vedas, or the Three Guṇas, i. e. in one word, the whole gamut of *trayī Vidyā*, the Triple Science which in short is the key to unlock the symbolical terminology enshrining Vedic metaphysical thought.

Sūrya is showering particles of Agni as *ghṛita* which fertilise the Mother Earth. This is an ancient language which in modern terms implies that the solar

centre of energy by its actinic and thermal radiations is scattering in space, the mysterious power which endows Mother Earth with the most valued quality of fecundity and procreation on the one hand and life at all levels on the other as in plants, animals and men.

From the Vedic point of view we may tabulate some of the Three Brothers of Agni :

	First Brother	Second Brother	Third Brother
1	Agni	Vāyu	Āditya
2	Gārhapatya	Dakshiṇāgni	Āhavanīya
3	Vishṇu	Brahmā	Rudra-Śiva
4	Sattva	Rajas	Tamas
5	Pṛithivī	Antariksha	Dyauḥ
6	Vāk (Pañcha-Bhūtas)	Prāṇa	Manas
7	Blood (*Asṛik*)	Vitality (*Asu*)	Spirit (*Ātmā*)
8	Vṛiddhi	Aśanāyā	Prajanana
9	Growth	Assimilation	Procreation
10	Matter	Life	Mind

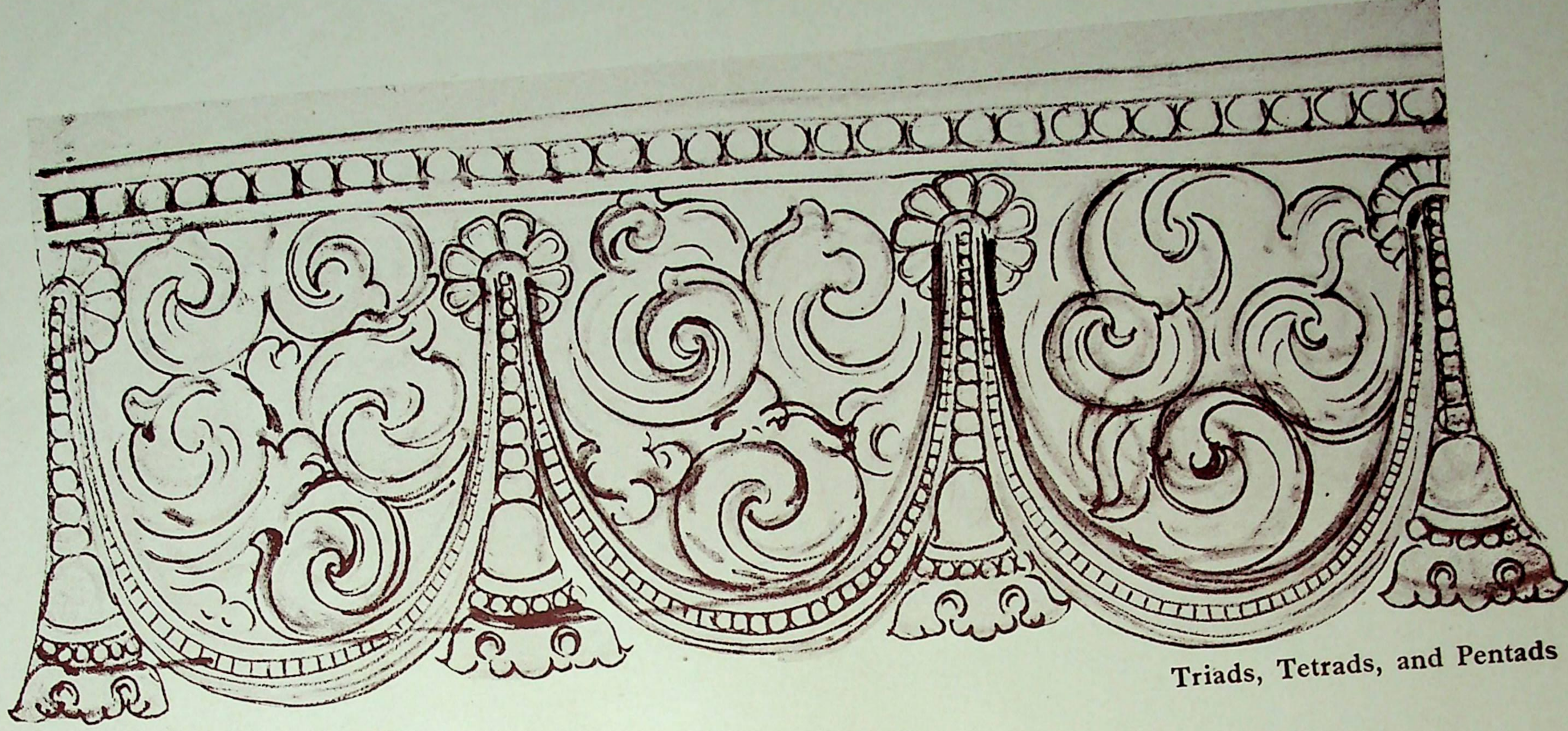
One may pursue the chain *ad infinitum*, for there is nothing in this world which is beyond the scope of the three guṇas, as the Gītā says : 18. 40.

It may also be noted that in spite of their distinct qualities and nature, the Three Brothers of Agni are a single team, which exist together, move together and function together. In whatever form we may discover them by the methods of philosophy or of science, their invariable co-existence is the basic fact of creation. The Three Brothers of Agni constitute the Tripod of Life which in modern terminology, if that be permitted in an old context it would be valid to conceive as the triple structural pattern of the human body with its central nervous system, manifesting as Epiblast, Mesoblast, Hypoblast. These are like three rods in parallel position (*Trivishṭabdhaka*) which support the body-frame as follows :

Epiblast, the inner most layer from which are derived the various glands, epidermis, nervous system, both central and peripheral, olfactory (*prāṇa*), auditory (*śrotra*), and opthalmic (*chakshu*) organs together with other sensory centres.

Mesoblast, middle layer from which are derived all structures between the epiblast and hypoblast, i.e. the connecting tissues, muscles, skeleton, blood vessels and lymphatic, and the urinary reproductive organs.

Hypoblast the outermost layer from which are derived the alimentary canal, glands of the oesophagus, stomach and intestine, lungs and bladder, bile ducts



Triads, Tetrads, and Pentads

Mantra—त्रिपाद्, चतुष्पाद्, पञ्चपाद्

and gall-bladder and pancreatic ducts, liver, the secreting cells of the pancreas and the notochord.

This is what modern anatomy and physiology tell us about the nature of the structure of the physical body. We do not mean to say for a moment that the Vedic author was acquainted with these distinctive details, but surely there is an implication that the mysterious power behind life was basically invested with the dominant principle of trinitarian formulation (*Trika*) and this being the eternal Law would be expressed and discovered in different ways by the ancients, *pūrvebhir ṛishibhiḥ* and by the moderns, *nūtanairuta*, RV. 1. 1. 2.

The Book of Knowledge that is in Nature has countless leaves of which some have been decoded and others remain to be deciphered by the progressive human mind in widening intimations. The truth is more essential than the outer forms. One might think of the exploding language of symbols as tending to grasp and express the essential unity of the cosmic structure rather than deviating to the multiplicity of external forms which no one can hope to exhaust.

Agni is called *Viśpati*, i.e., Lord of all peoples or tribes. The idea is elaborated in the Ṛig Veda by conceiving of Agni in each home (*gṛihe gṛihe*), in eash forest (*vane vane*), controlling as *Viśpati* or *Viśya* each tribe (*Viśyo viśaṁ viśam*), and as Lord of each *Jana* reigning supreme over each community of peoples (*janyo janaṁ janam*, RV. 10. 91. 2). These are different units all referring to the central idea of a governing power in the midst of an ordered system whether that is the individual, the society or the state, whether it is a single tree or cluster of trees forming the whole forest. The Three Brothers of Agni under the care of one Master and Guardian are present everywhere.

Agni is called *Sapta-Putra* 'Father of Seven Sons'. Working through the agency of Numbers, the Vedic thinkers chartered the wide world of symbolism into triads, tetrads, pentads and heptads. We have referred to some triads already. The diversification of One into Seven is essential for creation. In the Ṛig Veda a number of such groups of seven are mentioned; for example Seven Ṛishis (*Sapta Ṛishayaḥ*), Seven Aṅgirases, Seven Sages (*Sapta Viprāḥ*), Seven Priests (RV. II. 1. 2, X. 91. 10), Seven Āditya Devās (RV. X. 72. 9), Seven Vital Airs (*Sapta Prāṇāḥ*, RV. 1. 164. 15), Seven Mothers (*Sapta Mātaraḥ*, VIII.96. 1),Seven Sisters (*Sapta Svasāraḥ*, RV. 1. 164. 3.), Seven Sons (RV. 1. 164. 1), Seven Stations (*Sapta dhāma*), RV. 1. 22. 16), Seven Rivers (RV. X. 92. 4), Seven Cows (*Sapta Dhenavaḥ*, RV. IX. 26. 25), Seven Horses (*Saptāśvāḥ*, RV. 1. 164. 3; *Sapta haritaḥ*, RV. 1. 50. 8), Seven Wheels (*Sapta Chakra*, RV.1.164. 3), Seven Sticks (*Sapta Samidhaḥ*, VS. 17. 19), Seven Tongues (*Sapta Jihvāḥ*, RV. III. 6. 7) Seven Speeches (*Sapta Vāṇīḥ*, RV. III. 7. 1), Seven Jewels (*Sapta*

Ratnā, RV. V. 1. 5), Seven Quarters (*Sapta Diśaḥ*, RV. IX. 114. 4), Seven Steps (*Sapta Padāni*, RV. X. 8. 4), Seven Mouths (*Saptāsyaḥ*, RV. IV. 50. 4), Seven Rays (*Sapta-Raśmiḥ*, RV. IV. 50. 4). Seven Threads (*Sapta Tantu*, RV. X. 124. 1), Seven Germs (*Saptārdhagarbhāḥ*, RV. 1. 164. 36), Seven Names (*Sapta Nāmā*, RV. 1. 164. 3), Seven-Headed Thought (*Sapta Śīrshṇī Dhīḥ*, RV. X. 67. 1), Seven Maruts, Seven Seasons (*Sapta Ṛitus*, RV.), Seven Wombs (*Sapta Yoniḥ*, VS, 17. 79), Seven Demons (*Sapta-dānu*, RV.X. 120. 6), Seven Birds (*Sapta Suparṇāḥ*, AV. 9. 1. 22), Seven Metres (*Sapta Chhandāṁsi*, 9. 1. 22), Seven Offerings (*Sapta Homāḥ*, AV. 9. 1. 22), Seven Wild Animals (*Sapta Āraṇyāḥ Paśavaḥ*), Seven Tamed Animals (*Sapta Grāmyāḥ Paśavaḥ*, AV. 3. 10. 6.), etc. These and similar other Heptads form an essential plank in Vedic symbolism to explain the creative process in different centres and at different levels. The basic fact is that the Sages explain of the One as Seven through the power of their speech (*taṁ dhīrā vāchā praṇayanti sapta*, RV. X. 114. 7). The ŚB. discusses at length the Heptad symbolism with reference to the building of the Seven Layers of the Fire Altar and states that the seven-fold divisions extend over the whole domain of the cosmic and the individual manifestations : 'It is a hymn of seven verses —the fire-alter consists of seven layers, and these are the seven seasons, seven regions, seven worlds of gods, seven *stomas*, seven *Pṛisṭha sāmans*, seven metres, seven domestic animals, seven wild ones, seven vital airs in the head and whatever else there is of seven kinds, relating to deities and relating to the self–all that he thereby secures (*Saptarchaṁ bhavati*; *Saptachitiko'gniḥ saptartavaḥ sapta diśaḥ sapta devalokāḥ saptastomāḥ sapta prishṭhāni saptachhandāṁsi sapta grāmyāḥ paśavāḥ saptāraṇyāḥ sapta śīrshanprāṇā yatkiṁ cha saptavidhamadhidaivatamadhyātmaṁ tadenena sarvamāpnoti*, ŚB. 9. 5. 2. 8). It is a clear enunciation of the fact that according to the fundamental law of creation all the Heptads or hosts of Seven (*yatkiṁcha sapta sapta*) become focussed on the Fire built as an Altar of Seven Layers. The question may be asked as to which is that Fire and what is the Fire-Altar with Seven Layers ? The answer is that *Agni Vaiśvānara*, is the Life-Principle within the body (*ayamagnirvaiśvānaro yo' yam antaḥpurushe* ŚB, 14. 8. 10. 1). Each person is the same as *Agni Vaiśvā-nara* (*sa esho agnirvaiśvānaro yatpurushaḥ* ŚB. 10. 6. 1. 11). The Altar of Seven Layers is the Body, i.e. each individual organism where the Life-principle has become manifest. The seven layers symbolised in the ritual of the building of the Fire-Altar (*agnichayana*) are in fact the Mind, Life and Five Gross Material Elements (*Manas Prāṇa Pañcha bhūtāni*). By the integration of these Seven, the Self is created (*etanmayo vā ayamātmā vāṅmayo manomayaḥ prāṇamaya,* ŚB. 14. 4. 3. 10), where *Vāk* or *Śabda* is the symbol of the attributes of the *Pañchabhūtas*.)

The various numbers have been employed as the code symbols of metaphysical thought or cosmogonical principles discovered at several levels in the universe.



Mantra 1-विश्पतिं सप्तपुत्रम् Seven Sons





Mantra 1-विश्पतिं सप्तपुत्रम् Seven Sons

Therefore, the meanings underlying these numerical intimations are elastic, making for the vitality and expressiveness of the Mantras. Here the Seven Sons are not different from the Three Brothers, and it is just a different way of looking at things. Life, Mind and Matter (*Manas*, *Prāṇa*, *Vāk*) are the Three Brothers, and by counting the gross elements as five, they are the Seven Sons. The whole gamut of creation is comprehended by these Seven, variantly expressed in the Purāṇic language, as *Mahat*, *Ahaṅkāra* and Five *Tanmātrās*, called *Viśeshas* (*Mahadādi viśeshāntāḥ*, *Bhāgavata*, etc.).

Agni's Three Brothers, like the Three Strides of Vishṇu, and Seven Sons, like the Seven *Lokas* are ever present wherever Life-principle is present in any organic centre.





MANTRA 2

सप्त युञ्जन्ति रथमेकचक्रमेको अश्वो वहति सप्तनामा ।
त्रिनाभि चक्रमजरमनर्वं यत्रेमा विश्वा भुवनाधि तस्थुः ॥

—ऋ० वे० १।१६४।२॥

The Seven yoke the one-wheeled Chariot. A single Horse bearing Seven Names draws it.

The Wheel is with three navals, sound and undecaying, whereon all these worlds have their support.[2]

The arguments for this Mantra are :

(1) What is the Car (*Ratha*) ?
(2) Why is it called as of a single wheel ?
(3) Who are the Seven who yoke it ?
(4) Which is the one Horse with seven names, pulling this chariot ?
(5) Why is its single wheel, perfect and ageless, said to have three Naves (*trinābhi*) ?

The answer is furnished in the Mantra itself, viz., that this chariot is bearing the load of all the worlds and inferentially, it is the cosmos or creation itself described by the metaphor of a car. According to the principle of the correspondence or underlying unity between the macrocosm and the microcosm, the cosmic chariot is not different from the human body, described as a chariot in the Ṛig Veda itself and other texts. Whatever is in the cosmos is true in the individual centre also (*yo' sāvasau purushaḥ, so'hamasmi*; That and This are mutual images). Thus the answer to the first question is clear, viz. the chariot is the cosmos or the unfoldment

[2] *Griffith*—Seven to the one-wheeled chariot yoke the Courser ; bearing seven names the single Courser draws it.

Three-naved the wheel is sound and undecaying, whereon are resting all these worlds of being.

Wilson—They yoke the seven (horses) to the one-wheeled car; one horse, named seven, bears it along : the three-axled wheel is undecaying, never loosened, and in it all these regions of the universe abide.



Mantra 2—कालो अश्वो वहति | The Time Horse Carries

of the creative process by the Time-principle, symbolised as the movement of a Mountain Car bearing the load of the universe (*yatremā viśvā bhuvanādhi tasthuḥ*; see also Mantras 13 and 14 for the same idea). Whatever is stated of the Cosmic Car is applicable to the human body, and the same statement holds good at these two levels, viz. *adhidaivata* and *adhyātma*. Each individual is spoken of as a descendant of the Archetypal Ancestor (i.e., *Yama*)and named after him as *Yamayāna Kumāra*, who is riding in a chariot (RV. 10. 135. 3, 4, 5) :—'O Young Hero, you have created with your mind a chariot moving without wheels. Who created the chariot for the Hero and who is propelling it ?' For the Self as Charioteer, the Body is the Chariot, a familiar idea in the Upanishads.

The Wheel is the symbol of movement (*gati*). Originally, the cosmic chariot is supported by one wheel which is the absolute Time, but that one is transformed into seven wheels, *sapta chakra*—so that the chariot may be thrown into the vortex of tensional movement by which it revolves for ever. This is an imagery about which there is no difficulty. We are all aware how the single solar ray carries within its womb an octave of seven rays of different lengths and this is a feature essential for manifestation; otherwise there would be no light, no heat and no sound or any other kind of energy propulsion. In Mantra 1, the chariot is said to have one wheel (*eka chakra*) but immediately after, in Mantra 3 it is said to be having seven wheels, (*sapta chakra*). The same imagery is applied to the horse; in Mantra 2 it is a single horse and in Mantra 3 seven horses. It is a commonplace of Sanskrit solar symbolism that the seven rays are the seven horses of Sūrya which are also exemplified as the seven metres. The single wheel, therefore, draws attention to the basic unity underlying the multiplicity of the sevenfold patterns essential for pushing the creating process.

The one horse with seven names is *Kāla* or Time as clearly stated in the *Kāla Sūkta* of the Atharva Veda, (*kālo aśvo vahati sapta-raśmiḥ*, AV. 19. 53. 1). That horse is said to be thousand-eyed (*sahasrāksha*), pointing to Sūrya with its thousand rays as the Great Time-Horse. As here, so also in the Atharva Veda all the worlds are compared to the thousand wheels of the cosmic chariot, all of them invested with the dynamic power of movement from a single source like cog wheels in a big automaton. This Horse is ever on the move, not stopping for a second and thus it has immortal power. This is the reason why like other mechanical devices framed by mortal men, the cosmic chariot does not stop for the significant reason that the Creator entered with all his potency or immortal power into the framework erected by him as this cosmos verily is. This was the Vedic doctrine of *Anupraveśa* (RV. 10. 81. 1, *prathamachchhad avarāṅ āviveśa*, i.e., the Archetypal *become* the Types. The

Purāṇas mention seven different colours of the horses and in presenting a grand description of the solar Car, speak of twelve kinds of heptads following the original conception of the Yajur Veda (VS. 15. 15-19; Matsya, chs. 125-126; for interpretation, see my book : 'Matsya Purāṇa—A Study', pp. 211-213).

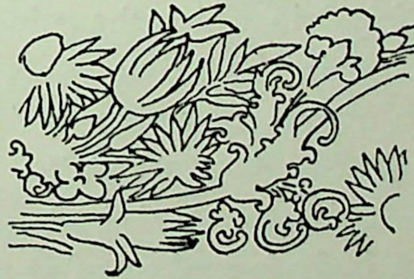
The wheel is perfect (*anarva*) and undecaying (*ajara*) and its axle has measureless potency (*bhūriretaḥ*) (AV. 19. 53. 1). If is said to have three naves (*tri nābhi*), the idea being the triple nature of the powers or the manifestations of the wheel, namely, the three modalities of Mind, Life and Matter, all three rooted in a single source, but each having its own *Nābhi* or centre. It is a tri-concentric wheel and Sūrya is its perfect exemplar being known as the symbol of *trayī vidyā*, the triple form of *Yajña* (*trivṛitam*, RV. 10. 124. 1; *ayaṁ yajño bhuvanasya nābhiḥ*, RV. 1. 164. 35.). The *trinābhi* symbolism stands for the various triads as the three *Vedas*, three *Devas*, three *Prāṇas*, three *Purushas*, etc. *Nābhi* is the same as *Hṛidaya* or centre and the ancient *Hṛidaya Vidyā* of the Upanishads, also called the *Akshara Vidyā*, was an elaboration of the Vedic *Nābhi Vidyā*. For this doctrine, see my book : 'Vedic Lectures', Trayī Vidyā, pp. 21-41 and Hṛidaya Vidyā, pp. 93-100).

The question remains as to the identity of the seven persons who sit on this chariot. The answer is that they are the *Seven* Sages (*sapta viprāḥ*), the seven primeval Ṛishis who were no other than the seven Prāṇic forces (*prāṇā vā ṛishayaḥ*) and finally, the symbolism resolves itself into the standing formula of Life, Mind and the five elements of matter, which are being transported on the cosmic chariot on the one hand and the human body on the other. It is for them that the chariot has been yoked. They are the sons of Agni who are enjoying a joy ride on this easy wheelless Car (*virūpāsa idṛishayasta idgambhīra vepasaḥ, te aṅgirasaḥ sūnavaste agneḥ-parijajñire*, RV. 10. 62. 5.).

It is gratifying that both Sāyaṇa and Ātmānanda explain this Mantra in the true symbolical way. Sāyaṇa explains it in terms of the *saṁvatsara chakra* or Sūrya as the Chariot (*Ratham āditya-maṇḍalam*). He thinks that the solar chariot is transported by the single principle of Vāyu divided into seven (*eka eva vāyuḥ sapta rūpaṁ dhṛitvā vahati*) which is quite relevant if we understand Vāyu as Prāṇa. He also takes *sapta nāmā* as sevenfold tensions (*saptadhā nāma-prakārāḥ*) as seen in the form of seven rays (*sapta saṅkhyakā raśmayaḥ*) or the seven seasons (*sapta ṛitavaḥ*) or the seven Ṛishis who sing the glory of the Sun (*sapta ṛishibhiḥ stūyamānaiḥ*). He translates *trinābhi* as the triple fasteners in the form of the three seasons, viz., summer, rains and winter by which the cycle of the year is maintained. He argues that the Mantra should be interpreted as speaking of the undecaying and ageless revolving wheel of time (*chakravat punaḥ punaḥ paribhramamāṇaṁ saṁvatsarākhyaṁ chakram*

ajaraṁ maraṇarahitam anarvam apratihatam īdṛiśaṁ saṁvatsarākhyaṁ chakram nānā kālāvayavopetam ayam ādityaḥ punar āvartayati).

Ātmānanda takes the Mantra in an *ādhyātmic* sense explaining *ratha* as the body (*śarīraṁ rathameva cha*) and the seven for whom the chariot is yoked as *Mahat*, *Ahaṁkāra* and the five *tanmātrās*. The one horse is explained as *ahaṁkāra* which gives movement to this chariot (*eka eva ahaṁkāro aśvasthānīyo vahati cheshṭayati*) and that *ahaṁkāra* is an attribute of Rudra. *Trinābhi* is explained by him even with greater depth stating that Time is threefold (*tridhā hi kālaḥ*) viz. absolute Time which is transcendent Brahman himself who impels *Prakṛiti*. (*Īśaḥ prakṛiticheshṭakaḥ prathamakālaḥ*) The second is Time as the differentiated units like the second, minute etc. (*kshaṇalavātmā dvitīyaḥ*), and the third is that aspect of Time which becomes concrete as Sūrya and which really by its rotating and revolving system is creating for us the Time of our experience (*Sūryātmā tṛitīyaḥ*). Thus we find here a clear statement about the three categories of Time: Absolute which is identical with the transcendent Divine Principle, Mahākāla as a deity, Relative but Unmanifest Time, and the third as manifest Time symbolised as Sūryātmā, the Time of our experience. He translates *trinābhi* as 'shining in a threefold manner' (*tridhā nabhati*, from the root *nabha dīptau*). He quotes from a Kalpa text the following : *Mahadādayo vahantyetach chharīraṁ kāla-chakritaṁ paramadhyāntabhedena taṁ kālaṁ trividhaṁ viduḥ*) i.e., *Mahat*, *Ahaṅkāra* and the five *tanmātrās* are driving this body borne on the wheel of Time (*kālachakrita śarīra*) and the Time which carries it is threefold, i.e., the highest, middle, lowermost as explained above.



MANTRA 3

इमं रथमधि ये सप्त तस्थुः सप्तचक्रं सप्त वहन्त्यश्वाः ।
सप्त स्वसारो अभि सं नवन्ते यत्र गवां निहिता सप्त नाम ॥

—ऋ० वे० १।१६४।३॥

The Seven are mounted on the Seven-wheeled Car drawn by Seven Horses.

Seven Sisters in a team utter songs of praise, where the Seven Steps of the Cows are imprinted.[3]

The same imagery of the chariot holds good in this Mantra and the explanations given earlier are valid for understanding the symbolism of this stanza. The seven who mount this chariot are the same as the seven for whom the chariot has been yoked. That which was called *eka chakra* is said to be *sapta chakra* and instead of one horse we here have seven horses, both pointing to the transformation of the one into seven. As Ātmānanda has pointed out, the one *Avyakta* or unmanifested Prakṛiti evolves as *Mahat* (Universal), *Ahaṅkāra* (Individuated Ego) and the five *tanmātrās* or the five attributes which become modified as the five gross elements of Matter. Ātmānanda is careful to point out that Mantra 2 is intended to describe the *Sūkshma Deha* or the subtle body that is the unmanifest principle on the plane of Prāṇa (*sūkshma-deham āśrityoktam*), and that Mantra 3 is with reference to the gross physical body (*Sthūladeham āśritya*) in which the principle of the several Heptads is emphasised. The suggestion that the seven horses comprise the qualities of *rajas* and *tamas* with the five organs of action which they are propelling (*rajaḥ saptāśvaḥ rajastamaḥ sahitāni pañcha karmendriyāṇi*).

For the human body the epithet *sapta chakra* is relevant in view of the Atharva passage in which the human body is spoken of as the inviolable city of Brahma

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[3] *Griffith*—The Seven who on the seven-wheeled car are mounted have horses, seven in tale, who draw them onward.

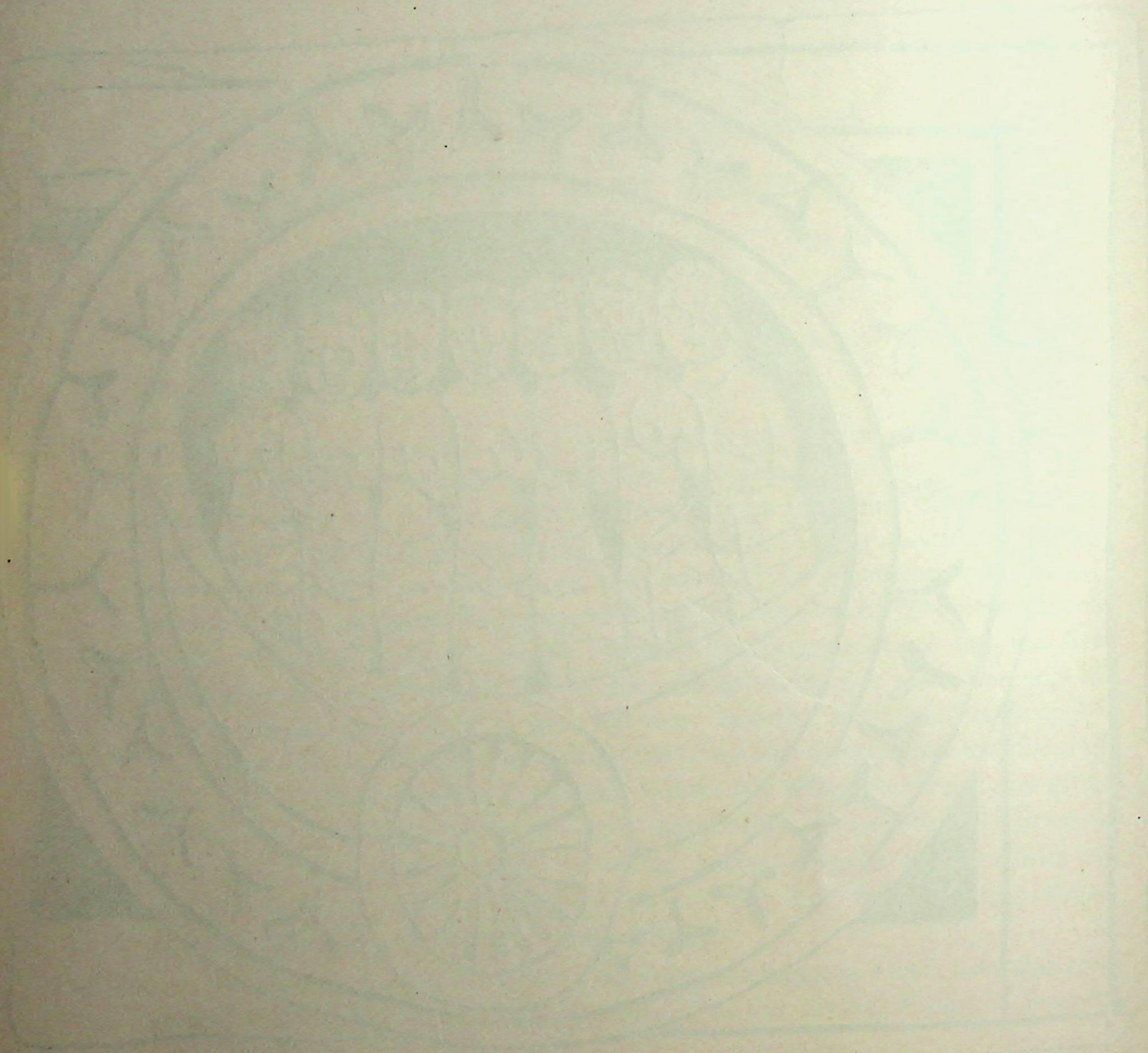
Seven sisters utter songs of praise together, in whom the names of seven cows are treasured.

Wilson—The seven who preside over this seven wheeled chariot (are) the seven horses who draw it ; seven sisters ride in it together, and in it are deposited the seven forms of utterance.



Mantra–3 सप्त स्वसारो अभि सं नवन्ते

Seven Singing Sisters



with eight *chakras* and nine portals, the number seven or eight being variable, according to the reckoning of the *chakras* variously (cf. Ātmānanda, *sapta chakramidaṁ deham*).

The imagery of the Seven Sisters singing songs of praise for the perfect chariot, its movement and the Seven who have yoked it is often repeated in the Ṛig Veda. For example, Agni is said to be the lover of the Seven Sisters who are like the red cows (*sapta svasṛīrarushīrvāvaśānāḥ*, RV. 10. 5. 5). The Seven Sisters moving forward are said to remove the effects of poison like the pea-fowl neutralising the deadly poisons of a serpent (RV. 1. 191. 14) where the symbolism of the Seven Sisters points to that of the Seven Streams or the channels of Prāṇic forces functioning within the body or the seven rays of the Sun which are antidotes to poison. In one Mantra the Seven Sisters are identified with the Seven Mares drawing the chariot of the Sun which are surely the seven rays (*sapta svasāraḥ suvitāya Sūryaṁ vahanti harito rathe*, RV. 7. 66. 15).

Another significant reference in the Ṛig Veda itself is to identify the Seven Sisters with the Seven Mothers who stand around the Babe, the noble new-born infant skilled in holy song who is the same as the divine Gandharva in the midst of floods and reigns as king of all the worlds (*sapta svasāro abhimātaraḥ śiśuṁ navam*, RV. 9. 86. 36).

If we look into mythology and folklore we find there the conception of the Seven Sisters also known as the Seven Mothers (*Sapta Mātaraḥ*) or the Seven Goddesses. We find in the Ṛig Veda a team of Seven Nymphs in the Urvaśī Sūkta, where Urvaśī is the leader of the six others, named *Sujūrṇi, Śreṇi, Sumna-āpi, Hrade chakshu, Granthinī* and *Saraṇyū* (RV. 10. 95. 6). Ṛig Veda 1. 23. 16 refers to the motif of the Mothers and Sisters (*ambayaḥ*; *jāmayaḥ*) which is still the belief in folklore about them, sometimes spoken of as the Seven Apsarases (*sāta achharā māī*) or Seven Sisters (*sāta bahinī*) of whom the eldest has in her possession the Drink of Immortality, Amṛita. This motif of the Seven Fairies is widespread in the folklore of many other nations. The Seven Mothers in the Purāṇas get new names as Brahmāṇī, Māheśvarī, Vaishṇavī, Indrāṇī, Vārāhī, Nārasiṁhī, and Chāmuṇḍā (later form of Vedic *Nirṛiti*). Pandit Madhusūdana Ojhā explains that the Prāṇic forces in the creative process conceived of as the *Sapta Ṛishis* are of four classes, (1) related to the Fire-Altar as in the *sapta chiti* or *suparṇa chiti* (*chatvāra ātmā dvau pakshau, puchchham ekam*); (2) in relation to the seven *sākañja* Ṛishis (RV. 1. 164. 15, *sākañjānāṁ saptatham āhurekajaṁ shaḍid yamā ṛishayo devajā iti*); (3) of the *sapta Ṛishis* as related to the seven rays of the Sun and called *Govidha* like *Agnividha* and *Sākañjavidha* gone before. These have different colours as *kāla* (violet), *nīla* (indigo), *dhūmala* (blue), *harita* (green), *pīta* (yellow), *hiraṇya* (orange or golden), *śoṇa* (red). The fourth class of *sapta Ṛishis* is of the pattern of

Seven Sisters (*savsṛividhāḥ*) which is related to the Seven Metres (*chhandasāmiva anyaḥ kramaḥ svasṛividhaḥ*, Ojhā : 'Devatā Nivit' p. 15). Thus, the motif of the Seven Sisters forms part of an ancient tradition known to Ṛig Veda, Purāṇas and also current in folklore and cult. It was certainly formulated against the background of a well understood thought and belief basic to the creative process at several levels.

Sāyaṇa takes *saṁnavante* as 'move', but it is better to take it in its literal sense of 'praising' or chanting songs of praise. In this Mantra we have a threefold scheme relating to Mind, (the Seven Owners of the chariot mounting it), Life or Prāṇa (*Sapta Aśvāḥ*), and thirdly, *Vāk* (seven metres, *aksharеṇa mimate sapta vāṇiḥ*, RV. 1. 164. 24). In Ṛigveda (8. 59. 3, 3. 1. 6, the seven forms of speech are said to be youthful maidens born from a single common womb or Mother and being the Great Daughters of heaven who are neither draped nor nude. The songs of the Seven Sisters signify the Seven Metres or rhythm of Life in Matter. The last quarter of the Mantra refers to the Heptad (*saptaka*) relating to the seven cows (*govidhā*) which, as explained above, refer to the seven rays of the Sun (RV. 7. 66. 15). The seven solar rays are the seven names of the cows. We usually find in the Ṛig Veda the motif of the Seven-Seven-Seven known as Thrice-Seven (*Tri-sapta*), or the triadic-heptads underlying each form of life becoming visible in matter (*ye trishaptāḥ pariyanti viśvā rūpāṇi bibhrataḥ*, AV. 1. 1. 1).

Here only seven names of the Cows are mentioned, but in 7. 87. 4, the names are thrice seven (*triḥsapta nāmānyghn bibharti*).

Symbolically the subject for the song of the Seven Sisters is the seven names of the Cows or the seven rhythmic notes of the chants. According to the basic doctrine of Vāk, she is often spoken of as the Cow (*devīṁ vācham ajanayanta devās tām viśva rupāḥ paśavo vadanti, sā no mandresham ūrjaṁ duhānā dhenurvāgasmān upa sushṭu-taitu*, RV. 8. 100. 11). Just as the one speech becomes sevenfold (*sapta vāṇīḥ*) similarly does the one Cow who is Aditi herself (*Pīpāya dhenuraditir ṛitāya*, RV. 1 .153. 3). Aditi is the World Mother or Infinite Universal Nature, who is symbolically mentioned as the Great Mother of the Seven Āditya Gods (*saptabhiḥ putrairaditir upa-prait pūrvyaṁ yugam*, 10. 72.9).



MANTRA 4

को द॑दर्श प्रथ॒मं जाय॑मानमस्थ॒न्वन्तं॒ यद॑न॒स्था बिभ॑र्ति ।
भूम्या॒ असु॒रसृ॑गा॒त्मा क्व॑ स्वि॒त् को वि॒द्वांस॒मुप॑ गा॒त् प्रष्टु॑मे॒तत् ॥

—ऋ० वे० १।१६४।४॥

Who has seen the Primeval Creation, seen how the Boneless supports the Bony.
Where is the Life (*Asu*), the Blood (*Asṛik*), and the Spirit (*Ātmā*) of Mother Earth ?
Who is the pupil approaching a teacher to explain ?[4]

The stanza is cast in a *Brahmodya* mould, pedagogically asking as to the student who is interested in such ontological pursuits and the teacher who will explain them. This style of interrogation is quite familiar in the Ṛig Veda where the word *Kaḥ* is both a question and an answer signifying 'Who' and also *Ka-Prajāpati* as the symbol of the Unmanifest (*amūrta, anirukta*) which is the same as *Hiraṇyagarbha* existing in the beginning as *Kasmai Devāya*, RV. 10. 121. 1. The question is 'Who has seen the cosmic origins ?' and the reply is '*kaḥ Prajāpati* has seen and knows how the Bony was produced from the Boneless'. The former refers to the world of Matter or substance and the latter to that of Mind or idea or *Bhūtasṛishṭi* and *Prāṇa-sṛishṭi*. *Bhūtasṛishṭi* is also mentioned in the Purāṇas as the *Maithunī sṛishṭi* and the other as *Prāchetasī-sṛishṭi* or *Mānasī-sṛishṭi*. Sāyaṇa explains the 'Bony' as the material and visible world and the 'Boneless' as its Cause, viz., *Avyakta Prakṛiti*. Ātmānanda almost agrees in taking the Boneless as the First Cause, *Prathamam Kāraṇam* and the Bony as the material world.

The second line referring to the Blood (*asṛik*), Life (*asu*) and the spirit (*ātmā*), of the Earth is a vital statement for Vedic philosophy. Here *Ātmā* stands for Mind, *Asu* for Life and *Asṛik* or Blood for life in Matter. These are the three fundamental categories of *Manas, Prāṇa* and *Bhūta* (Life, Mind and Matter) which we

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[4] *Griffith*—Who hath beheld him as he sprang to being, seen how the boneless one supports the bony ?

Where is the blood of earth, the life, the spirit ? Who may approach the man who knows, to ask it ?

Wilson—Who has seen the primeval (being) at the time of his being born : what is that endowed with substance which the unsubstantial sustains : from earth are the breath and blood, but where is the soul : who may repair to the sage to ask this ?

have explained in the earlier Mantras, and for which we have here a precise and clear statement. The question is about the source of these triple entities which are created by the earth (*Bhūmi*), which is the symbol of Motherhood, both for the individual and for the Universal. She is the same as *Mahad Yoni* or *Prakṛiti* of the later *Sāṁkhya* system. *Mahat* itself corresponds to *Buddhi*, *Asu* to *ahaṁkāra* and *Asṛik* to the material substance of the *Bhūtas*.

The principle of *Asu* should be clearly understood. It is also mentioned in RV. 10 121. 7 :

> *Āpo ha yadbṛihatīrviśvamāyan garbhaṁ dadhānā janayantīragnim*
> *Tato devānāṁ samavartatāsurekaḥ Kasmai devāya havishā vidhema.*

The expansive Waters or the primeval Flood as the Mother-Principle conceived and bore Agni in their womb which was the life-principle (*Asu*) of all the gods. The meaning is that Agni was the germinal seed of the cosmos in which all the celestial and earthly powers, energies or Devas, were inherent and that Agni as *Prāṇa* is the same as *Asu*. The Śatapatha clearly explains *Asu* as *Prāṇa* : (*Prāṇo vā Asuḥ*, ŚB. 6. 6. 26; *Tasya etasya hi vāchaḥ prāṇo vā asuḥ, esha u hīḥdaṁ sarvamasūteti*, JUB. 1. 40. 7). It is because of this *Asu* that Agni is called the great *Asura* of heaven : (*Asuro maho divaḥ*, RV. 2. 1. 6). When the universal Mother symbolised as *Bhūmi* conceives, she generates the three principles of *Ātmā* (=*Manas*), *Asu* (=*Prāṇa*), and (*Asṛik* (=*Bhūta*), i.e., the three primeval entities of Mind, Life and Matter. Who knows this mystery and who seeks an answer to this Great Question ? (*Ko Vidvāṁsam upa gāt prashṭumetat*).



MANTRA 5

पाकः पृच्छामि मनसाविजानन् देवानामेना निहिता पदानि ।
वत्से बष्कयेऽधि सप्त तन्तून् वि तत्निरे कवय ओतवा उ ॥
—ऋ० वे० १।१६४।५॥

Immature in understanding, undiscerning in spirit, I ask where the stations of the Gods exist.

When the Calf had become the yearling, the Sages spread the Seven Threads to form a web.[5]

The pupil whose immature understanding has no knowledge of these ultimate truths shows his humility in stating that he wants to know the hidden source where the gods have come from. We have direct knowledge that there are numerous divine powers (*devas*) working both on the level of the cosmos and the human body. Their abodes are said to be so many *Lokas* of which they are the city-fathers (*lokino lokapālāścha*). Their original home from which they have stepped forth into this realm is the secret. Even presuming that the source is one, what is the cause that starts the differentiating process by which the one Deva becomes the many Devas. This is the question for all men of science and philosophy, each of whom is the model of the immature pupil (*pāka*) so long as he does not know the answer to the Great Question (*Saṁpraśna*). The confession of *Dīrghatamas* in calling himself a *pāka* reflects the mind of all truth-seekers. The foot-prints of the Devas have their visible impress in the dust of the cosmos which means in simple language that the great law of cause and effect must demonstrate to us the ascending sources or the final point from which creation proceeds. Why is it that the known at some stage slides into the lap of the unknown ? The mystery therefore refuses to be solved ? That is where the human mind finds itself puzzled and perplexed. If the law of cause and effect is inviolable, why is it that the veil over

[5] *Griffith*—Unripe in mind, in spirit undiscerning, I ask of these the Gods' established places;
For up above the yearling Calf the sages, to form a web, their own seven threads have woven.

Wilson—Immature (in understanding), undiscerning in mind, I inquire of those things which are hidden (even) from the gods : (what are) the seven threads which the sages have spread to envelop the sun, in whom all abide ?

the mystery is not lifted. The question is everywhere, but its answer is nowhere. The smarting in the heart of *Dīrghatamas* belongs to us all.

The second line of the Mantra makes the statement that the seven primeval sages referred to as Poets (*Kavayaḥ*) spread this warp and woof of the universe comprised of Seven Threads (*sapta tantu*) and the time taken by them in doing so was the period in which the Calf is weaned from its Mother. This period is a *Saṁvatsara* and instead of saying directly that the unit of time taken for weaving the cloth of seven threads i.e. the cosmos, the Ṛishi states it in an indirect manner.

The doctrine of Seven Threads (*Sapta Tantu*) is that of *Yajña*, as clearly stated in the Ṛig Veda itself (*imaṁ no agna upa yajñamehi pañcha yāmaṁ trivṛitaṁ sapta tantum*—come to our Yajña, O Agni, which is three-fold, has five courses and consists of seven threads, RV. 10. 124. 1). *Sapta Tantu* as a synomym of *Yajña* is well known in classical Sanskrit and the followers of the *Yajña* doctrine were known as *Sāpta-Tāntava* (Harsha-Charita, ch. 8 p. 236 Nirṇaya Sagar). The whole cosmic process is a *Yajña* of Seven Threads, viz. Mind, Life and Pañcha Bhūtas, and all other Heptads also being implied.It is also conceived of as the cloth woven by the Seven Mothers, each Mother supplying and controlling a thread for their common son (*vastrā putrāya mātaro vayanti*, RV. 5. 47. 6). The Calf is Sūrya, as explained by Sāyaṇa, saying that the year-old Calf is *Bashkaya*. The year is a unit of time taken by the rotation of the Cosmic Wheel and that is the period for the turning over of one piece-length of the cloth, so to say. The year is only a relative unit, and, there are numberless units of time each operative in the case of different creatures who complete their life cycle in that temporal period. Each life is a *Yajña* controlled by the dynamic principle of Time and the same is true of the Cosmos or creation.

Why is Sūrya spoken of as the Calf ? Sūrya is the son of *Virāj*, the Universal Mother Cow and when the Cow comes to the presence of mortal men, she always brings her Calf with her (RV. 1. 164. 17). Indeed there is no conception of the Cow without Sūrya which is her manifest Calf. The whole cosmic process within the bounds of infinite Nature is being made visible through Sūrya. Sūrya also is not merely the Star in the centre of our solar system, but there is a Sūrya for each universe, and for millions of universes, there are so many Suns, the highest of them being Brahman Himself (*Brahma Sūrya-samaṁ jyotiḥ*, VS. 23. 48). Because of Sūrya wearing a garment of his system, he is called *Vivasvān*, the Robed One. The principle of the Robe (*Vastra*) is the same as that of finitisation, a kind of limiting envelope (*āvaraṇa*), the same as the *Maṇḍala*.

Ātmānanda explains the steps (*padāni*) as those of the three gods, Brahmā, Vishṇu and Rudra, which also is right, as we have explained above, that Vishṇu

corresponds to *Sattva* or *Mānas*, Brahmā to *Rajas* or *Prāṇa*, Rudra to *Tamas* or *Pañcha Bhūtas*, and thus the three Devas are taking Sevan Steps.

Each child is suckled by the Mother for the unit of time called *saṁvatsara*. So was Sūrya fed by the universal Cow for one *saṁvatsara*. The idea is that the time taken for the techtonic maturity of the Sun to emerge as a perfect golden orb from the nebulous masses of the primeval ocean was its own duration of a *saṁvatsara*, however long in terms of human years the period might be.

The cloth of the seven threads is being woven from year to year in the same piece-length coming always afresh each year. This has reference to the yearly rejuvenation of the Sun in mythical tales. Each year a new Calf appears in place of the old that has been weaned away, since the Mother Cow calves every year. In the Vedic language such a Cow is called *Naityikī* (=*Nitya-vatsā*, Hindi नैचिकी) who has a Calf suckling her milk without break. Such is the Cosmic Cow like the earthly cow called *samāṁ-samīnā* (*samāṁ samāṁ vijāyate*, Pāṇini, 5. 2. 12).

In the case of the *saṁvatsara* or year or the Weaned Calf as time-unit we are reminded of the Purāṇic story of Satyavān and Sāvitrī in which Satyavān was destined to live only for a year after marriage with Sāvitrī. Sāvitrī is solar power and Satyavān is Sūrya himself resurrected from year to year.



MANTRA 6

अचिकित्वाञ्चिकितुषश्चिदत्र कवीन्पृच्छामि विद्मने न विद्वान् ।
वि यस्तस्तम्भ षळिमा रजांस्यजस्य रूपे किमपि स्विदेकम् ॥

—ऋ० वे० १।१६४।६॥

I ask, unknowing, those who know, the Sages, as one all-ignorant for the sake of knowledge :

Who is that Mysterious One, in the form of the Unborn, who has established these Six Regions.[6]

In line one of the Mantra, two stages of want of knowledge are mentioned, *Achikitvān* and *Na vidvān*; the former refers to ignorance on the plane of Mind or metaphysical thought or about the First Cause, the Unmanifest Source, and the latter about the mystery of the cosmic working on the material plane. The first is called *Jñana* and the second *Vijñāna*. The Ṛishi pleads ignorance on both these planes so far as the cosmic meaning is concerned and he appeals for light to those who understand this two-fold mystery. The implication is that both in the gross matter and in the subtle cause, both in the manifest and the unmanifest, the secrets of Nature's working are not known.

The second line refers to the twofold entities of the one transcendent Being (*kimapisvidekam*) and the six worlds of manifestation (*shaḍ rajāṁsi*). The former is the support of the latter as the centre is of its circumference or Maṇḍala. The one Being is spoken of as something unknown (*kimapisvid*), unpredicable which is the same as the One without a second (*advitīyam ekam*), or defined as '*Neti*', '*Neti*', 'Not This', 'Not This.' The transcendent Being is conceived of as a Pillar on which the worlds are supported (*tastambha, askabhnāt*). He is the self-existent Creater called *Svayambhū*, beyond which no other category is logically admissible. He is also called *Satya* or

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[6] *Griffith*—I ask, unknowing, those who know, the sages, as one all-ignorant for sake of knowledge, What was that One who in the Unborn's image hath established and fixed firm these worlds six regions.

Wilson—Ignorant, I inquire of the sages who know (the truth) ; not as one knowing (do I inquire), for the sake of (gaining) knowledge : What is that One alone, who has upheld these six spheres in the form of the unborn ?

the *Sat* principle. The six regions (*shaḍ rajāṁsi*) are the six worlds (*lokāḥ rajāṁsi*, Nirukta, *uchyante, ime vai lokā rajāṁsi*, ŚB. 6.3.1.18). They are as follows :

(*i*) *Bhūḥ*
(*ii*) *Bhuvaḥ*
(*iii*) *Svaḥ*
(*iv*) *Mahaḥ*
(*v*) *Janaḥ*
(*vi*) *Tapaḥ*
(*vii*) *Satyam*

The first six are supported by the seventh which is *Satyam* and which is both within the category of these seven and also beyond them as one without a second.

These six *Lokas* have been created by the power of movement (*rajas*) and therefore known as *Rajāṁsi*. They represent the scheme of Vedic cosmology in which the seven *Lokas* are arranged in an ascending scale and divided in a twofold manner, viz. as Three Fathers and Three Mothers (*tisro mātṛīstrīn pitṛīn bibhradekaḥ*, RV. 1.164.10) and as three earths (*tisraḥ pṛithivī*, RV. 1.34.8) and three heavens (*tisro dyāvaḥ*, RV. 1.35.6; see also RV. 7.87.5, *tisro dyāvo . . . . .tisro bhūmīḥ uparāh shaḍvidhānāḥ* ; also Atharva, 4.20.2, *tisro divas tisraḥ pṛithivī shaṭ chemāḥ pradiśaḥ pṛithak*). The Atharva speaks of *dyāvā-pṛithivī* together as six (*shadāhurdyāvā-pṛithivī*, A V. 8.9.16) and it also compares them with the six regions of space which are separate from each other and stand out as symbols of the former (AV. 4.20.2)..

The seven *Lokas* thus may be arranged in the following cosmological scheme:

I	II	III
1 *Pṛithivī*=Earth=*Bhūḥ Loka*—First Mother	1 *Pṛithivī*=Earth=*Svar Loka*—Second Mother.	1 *Pṛithivī*=Earth = *Jana Loka*—Third Mother.
2 *Antarikṣham*=Mid-Point Intermediate region—*Bhuvar Loka*	2 *Antariskham*=Mid-point=*Mahar Loka*.	2 *Antariskham*=Mid-point =*Tapaḥ Loka*.
3 *Dyauḥ*=Heaven=*Svar Loka*—First Father.	3 *Dyauḥ*=Heaven=*Jana Loka*—Second Father.	3 *Dyauḥ* Heaven *Satya Loka*—Third Father.

The Father-principle of the first triad becomes the Mother in the second ; the same is true of the third, with the result that there is an interlinking of the three creative modalities, represented as Father-Mother or Dyāvā-Pṛithivī. It is a pattern also described as the seven regions of *Pṛithivī* (*pṛithivyāḥ saptadhāmabhiḥ*. RV. 1.22.16). Here the six *Lokas* are distinguised from the seventh which like the middle point in a circle of six radii, is their support, or in other words, the *axis*

mundi. As on a firm linch-pin rests the chariot similarly the three heavens find their support on the self-existent Creator (RV. 1.35.6). The six worlds are called *Rajāṁsi* and the seventh as *Paro-rajas*, that which is beyond the sphere of cosmic dust, unborn and immortal (*Aja*). It may be noted that the *Aja* principle in the Ṛig Veda is of great significance which stands as the symbol of the immortal (*Amṛita*), unmanifest (*Amūrta*), unknown (*Anirukta*) Prajāpati who in later philosophy was known as *Avyaya Purusha*. The six *Rajāṁsi* (also RV. 2.13.10) are mentioned as the Six Vast Ones (*Shaḍ Urvīḥ*, AV. 6.47.3, 10.7.35).

The Vedic conception of the seven worlds may be looked upon in several ways, viz. as a *Meru,* as a *Maṇḍala* or as a *Suparṇa*. If we look at them as three superimposed patterns of the Father-Mother principles essentially required for progenition on the three levels of Mind, Life and Matter, we may conceive of the *Lokas* as *Meru* with three terraces (*trimedhi*) which is the same as *tri-vedi* for the Three Fires. The seventh is the apex, also known as *Bindu* in the later *Śrī-Chakra* terminology, or as *Nāka-Pṛishṭha* or *Divas-Pṛishṭha* in Vedic words. Each one of the terraces or vertical extensions is bound by a lower and an upper line, and since they are an interconnected mass, each upper line forms the base for the next storey. This is the *Meru* or pyramidal conception of the seven *Lokas* mentioned as the Unmanifest One and the Manifest Six *Rajāṁsi.*

If we look at the *Lokas* horizontally as a *Chakra* or *Maṇḍala*, we have three concentric bands of the same connotation as *Pṛithivī*, *Antariksha*, *Dyauḥ*, with the centre as the dynamic point for the peripheral extensions. These three concentric bands, each enclosed by a pair of lines is the form of the ideal *Maṇḍala* present in every *Chakra*, since the body and the cosmos are both conceived of as *Chakra*. The *Maṇḍala* conception of the seven *Lokas*, coming into existence by the three steps of Vishṇu, also applies to them. The Unmanifest centre or point which is only a mathematical conception without length, breadth and thickness is *Satya Loka* or Divine Vishṇu Himself. His First Step is the manifest Point which becomes the working hypothesis of the circle, and howsoever small it may be, it must have its three dimensions, which release the dimensional extension of the diameter and the circumference. The Third Step of Vishṇu is the delimiting periphery, horizon or circumference which separates one *Maṇḍala* from an other. There are a thousand such circles along the points of the diameter both ways. Each one of them is called *Rikvan* and the developing circumference or the extending diameter is known as 'striding' by the power of speech (*archaṁścharati*, also *vimimāna ṛikvabhiḥ*, RV. 1.155.6). According to the esoteric meaning or symbolism of the *Trayī Vidyā* the Centre called also *Nābhi* or *Hṛidaya* is *Yajus*, the expanding diameter obtained by adding point after point on either side is *Ṛik*, and

the circumference is *Sāman* or a *Tejo-Maṇḍala* comparable to the rays scattering from a centre and forming a circle of light. This composite form of *Ṛik-Yajuḥ-Sāma* is the theme of several statements in the Brāhmaṇas, and represents the basic conception of *Trayī Vidyā*. According to the Gopatha, the dynamic movement released by the centre is *Yājushī Gati*, that is the principle of motion symbolised as the power of the Yajur Veda. The extension of the diameter as a result of that movement is the power of the Ṛig Veda which produces the *Mūrti* or Form. The encircling *Tejas* is the power of Sāma Veda, thus all three being integrated and forming one pattern (*Ṛichā mūrtir, yājushī gatiḥ, sāmamayaṁ tejaḥ*, GB. 1.2.9; also *ṛigbhyo jātāṁ sarvaśo mūrtimāhuḥ sarvā gatiryājushī haiva śaśvat, sarvam tejo samarūpyaṁ ha śavśat sarvaṁ vedaṁ brahmaṇā haiva sṛishṭam*, TB. 3,12.9.1).

The third pattern of the Seven *Lokas* is that of a *Suparṇa* symbolised as building of the Fire Altar in the *Suparṇa Chiti*, i.e. form of a bird, representing Agni Prajāpati. In fact, each human body is that *Suparṇa Chiti*, a Fire Altar in the form of a bird (*purushaḥ suparṇaḥ*, ŚB. 74.2.5). *Yajña* itself, identified with *Purusha* on the one hand (*adhyātma* level) and with *Prajāpati* on the other (*adhidaivata* level), is a *Suparṇa* (TB. 14.3.10, ŚB. 10.2.2.4., RV. 10.149.3). The form of *Suparṇa* is said to have a fourfold Svastika-like pattern in the middle described as *chatvāraḥ ātmā*, two lateral extensions or wings, *dvau pakṣhau*, and the seventh as the tail of the bird, *Pucchha*, which is defined as *pratishṭhā*, or the principle of rest which is the subtsratum and support of movement. The transcendent One, *kimapisvidekam* is that point of *Pratishṭhā*, the point of fixity. In fact what are described as four *ātmans* of the *Suparṇa* correspond to the four regions of space. Each material form *Bhūta Chiti* is a *Suparṇa*, which in its triple form of Mind, Life and Matter is symbolised as the three *Suparṇas* (AV. 18.4.4.). The threefold conception of the seven *Lokas*, in terms of length, breadth and depth is an integrated one to build up the thought form of the Unmanifest becoming the Manifest by taking recourse to these three dimensions and still retaining his Unmanifest form. The seven *Lokas* or worlds corresponding to the seven mountains headed by *Meru* belong to the plane of the Mind ; as *Maṇḍala* they belong to the plane of *Prāṇa*; and as *Suparṇa*, they belong to the level of the *Bhūtas* or Matter. The doctrine of *Loka Vidyā* is one of the major principles in the consmology of the Ṛig Veda and is expressed by several terms as *Lokas, Rajāṁsi, Sarpāḥ, Diśaḥ*, etc.

MANTRA 7

इह ब्रवीतु य ईमङ्ग वेदास्य वामस्य निहितं पदं वेः ।
शीर्ष्णः क्षीरं दुंहते गावो अस्य वव्रिं वसाना उदकं पदापुः ॥

—ऋ० वे० १।१६४।७॥

Let him who knows presently declare it : what is the securely founded station of this Beautiful Bird.

The Cows draw milk from his head, and wearing his vesture, drink water with their foot.[7]

In this Mantra also we find Ṛishi Dīrghatmas, the sightless sage, who has a vision in long darkness, speaking as some modern Professor Challenger declaring : 'Let him alone open his tongue in these matters who has an inkling into their secrets.' (*Iha brivītu ya īmaṅga veda*). And, what is that secret about which he so boldly interrogates ? The secret is about the original source (*pada*) of the Beautiful Bird (*vāmasya veḥ*) which Sāyaṇa and Griffith rightly translate as Āditya, and Ātmānanda as *Suparṇa* or the Supernal Sun, namely Brahman (*veḥ suparṇasya paramātmanaḥ*). The origin of the forces that built the solar system with the wondrous Golden Orb in the middle is a mystery that baffles modern science where all become Blind Seers. As a matter of fact, the answer supplied by the Veda is that Sūrya is the symbol of the trinitarian principle of Mind, Life and Matter which have brought into being the creative process and that these three have their root and support in an unmanifest transcendent source which is unkown and unknowable and may be given as many appellations as human speech is capable of.

The Cows give milk from their head and drink water with their feet. This is stated in the nature of a riddle but has a definite meaning in this context. Here the two

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[7] *Griffith*—Let him who knoweth presently declare it, this lovely Bird's securely founded station. Forth from his head the Cows draw milk, and, wearing his vesture, wih their foot have drunk the water.

Wilson—Let him who knows this (truth) quickly declare it ; the mysterious condition of the beautiful ever-moving (sun): the rays shed (their) milk from his (exalted) head, investing his form with radiance : they have drunk up the water by the paths (by which they were poured forth).

symbols of Head and Feet, and of Milk and Water should be clearly understood. Head is the symbol of Heaven (*Sīrshṇo dyauḥ samavartata*, RV. 10.90.14), of immortality and of the Devas. The Feet are the symbol of the Earth (*padbhyāṁ bhūmiḥ*, RV. 10.90.14), inanimate existence and *āsuric* darkness. This distinction is reflected in Milk and Water. Both are of a fluid nature but Milk represents Life and Immortality, the best sustaining food that Nature has created for man, whereas Water is in itself not able to sustain the Life-principle. Although the ordinary cows drink water with their mouth and give milk from the udders between their legs, but it is reverse with the Divine Cows that are released by Sūrya. Those Cows are its rays which bring to us the great store of energy from an inexhaustible source which is in heaven or the Head and distribute that energy in the material world all round.

Here the Ṛishi intends to emphasise the two principles of Mind and Matter, their distinction and their inter-relation, which may be pursued in terms of a twofold symbolism based on the duality that brings the creative process into existence. An ordinary cow is a wonderful laboratory of Nature which drinks water and eats grass (again a watery substance in a changed form) (RV. 1.164.40, *Addhi triṇam aghnye piba ṣuddhamudakam ācharantī*) and gives milk. Milk is the immortal drink Ambrosia, Elixir, Nectar than which there is nothing higher in Nature's provision stores. This conversion of water into milk is in itself a wondrous phenomenon which is due to the principle of Motherhood in the Cow. The rays of the Sun as Cows are absorbing fluid from all sources including plants and converting their watery substance into milky food that is rich in proteins, carbo-hydrates, starch, fat, minerals and salts; this milky secretion becomes condensed as cereals in the body of plants and is not much different in nature from the Milk in the Cow's teats, excepting that the sustaining quality of the cow's milk is much superior in Nature's design. The Earth is also the Mother Cow, so also the solar rays, and similarly the senses in the human body. The imagery of the conversion of water into milk holds good on all these levels. From another point of view this truth may be understood. This physical body is sustained by physical food, but it is at every moment creating energy of which the centre is the head, viz. the powers of the mind, which as centres in the brain control the entire bodiy mechanism. That is the Milk given by the cows. Milk is also water but containing an infinite number of the tiniest globules of butter, which is *Ghṛita* or *Ājya* and was the Vedic symbol of the human seed (*reto vai ājyam*, ŚB. 1.9.2.7; 3.6.4.15). Butter is also the symbol of the principle of *Prāṇa* or life (*Prāṇo vai ājyam*, TB. 3. 8. 15, 2-3). In fact the Fire that becomes the Flaming Will, Mind and Thought with the potency of desire is symbolised as *Ghṛita*. The God of Love born from the Mind, *Manasija*, has *Ghṛija*, or the human seed as his Self (*kāma ājyam*,

TB. 3.1.4.15). The whole creative process of *Yajña* depends on *Ghṛita*, and *Ghṛita* depends on Milk and Milk, on the Cow to whose mysterious faculty of changing water into milk the Ṛishi is referring as an answer to his bold question. According to him, the original Mother who gave birth to the Sun-Calf is the Cosmic Cow named Aditi or Infinite Universal Nature, who is omniform, *Viśvarūpā*, all-sustainer, *Viśvadhāyāḥ*. Earth, Sky and Heaven on the spatial plane, Father, Mother and Son on the biological plane, the Five Tribes of men on the human plane, all the celestial and earthly Gods on the divine plane, and the past, present and future on the temporal plane are manifestations of Infinite Nature or Aditi, the Universal Cow.

The pharase *vavriṁ vasānā*. 'wearing his vesture', is significant which Sāyaṇa renders as 'creating multiple forms' (*rūpa nāmaitat, rūpaṁ vasānā āchchādayantyaḥ*). The doctrine of *Vavri* is the same as that of *Āvaraṇa*, an enveloped form, a limited system in which the cows move and have their being, or the principle of motion has its twofold oscillation. Unless there is the *Vavri* or *Rūpa* designed by Nature as the object of creation, there can be no use of the cow's milk or the energy released by the movement of the rays. It is necessary that that energy be brought under the control of a centre governing a form, or *Maṇḍala* that is its *Vavri*.





Mantra 8 माता पितरमृत आ बभाज
Mother and Father

MANTRA 8

माता पितरमृत आ बभाज धीत्यग्रे मनसा सं हि जग्मे ।
सा बीभत्सुर्गर्भरसा निविद्धा नमस्वन्त इदुपवाकमीयुः ॥

—ऋ० वे० १।१६४।८॥

In the Region of the Universal Ṛita, the Mother separated from the Father, and in the primeval ages wedded him in spirit and mind.

She in her period (*bībhatsu*), with the fluid potencies to conceive, was fecundated. Then the whole world approached her full of adoration.[8]

Four statements are made here in this Mantra :

1. The Father-principle and the Mother-principle became differentiated on the plane of *Ṛita*;

2. She, the Mother, chose her husband with the power of her mind and intellect;

3. The Mother filled with the secretions for producing the babe (*garbharasā*) first becomes turbid (*bībhatsu*) and is then fecundated (*nividdhā*);

4. She is the personified *Vāka* and as such all the Gods and men come to her in adoration.

We should first understand the region of *Ṛita* as part of Vedic cosmogony. *Ṛita* is called *Parameshṭhī* (*ṛitameva parameshṭhi*, TB. 1. 5. 5. 1). In the beginning two principles, *Ṛita* and *Satya*, were created from the primeval Heat (RV. 10. 190. 1). Of these *Satya* is *Svayambhū* or the self-existent Father-principle, representing Agni, and *Ṛita* is *Parameshṭhī*, Universal Mother-principle or the primeval flood. This

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[8] *Griffith*—The Mother gave the Sire his share of Order ; with thought, at first, she wedded him in spirit.

She, the coy Dame, was filled with dew prolific : with adoration men approached to praise her.

Wilson—The mother (earth), worships the father (sun), with holy rites, for the sake of water ; but he has anticipated (her wants) in his mind: whereupon, desirous of progeny, she is penetrated by the dews of impregnation, and, (all) expectant of abundance, exchange words (of congratulation).

division of the two universal Parents is for the first time seen on the level of *Parameshṭhī*. The distinction of male and female appears in the Cosmic Egg by the process of self-fission as *Ardhanārīśvara* or *Nara-Nārī-Vapuḥ*, a well known theme in the Vedic doctrine of cosmogony. The union of the two parents in the region of Parameshṭhī is for the sake of *Mānasī sṛishṭi*, mind-born creation, i.e. creation on the plane of mind or ideas; as stated here the Mother thought of the Father and united with him in her mind. These are the Universal Parents, i.e. the First Pair of Father and Mother. In the second stage for creating the *Maithunī sṛishṭi*, creating life on the plane of matter by sexual union the two parents bear two wombs, become manifest as *Dyāvā-Pṛithivī*, i.e. the visible Sun and the Earth, or the two worldly parents who unite for producing the Babe or Life in Matter, in the form of plants, animals and men.

This doctrine was related to that of *Hiraṇyagarbha*. *Hiraṇya* is the seed which is deposited by the Father in the womb of the Mother; that seed becomes the Babe; that is the Golden Germ or *Hiraṇya Garbha*, namely, the fertilised Ovum, which is the Focus of Life. The two worlds of *Dyāvā-Pṛithivī* are the symbols of Father and Mother (*Dyauḥ pitā pṛithivī mātā*). The two parents are held together by the ordinances of Varuṇa, Lord Of *Ṛita* or Ocean (*Dyāvā-pṛithivī Varuṇasya dharmaṇā vishkabhite*, RV. 6. 70. 1); they are the glory of the worlds, both moistened by butter, *ghṛitavatī*, expansive, *urvī*, dimensional, *pṛithivī*, milking honey or immortal Soma, *madhudughe*, beautiful, *supeśasā*, undecaying, *ajarā*, and having abundant seed, *bhūriretasā*. Of these, the one is called in the Gītā as the Seed-depositing Father (*Bījapradaḥ pitā*) and the other as *Yoni*, also named as *Mahat* or *Mahad Brahma*. Its cogent conception is of the Father being the unmanifest point or centre, and the Mother his *Mahimā* or universal extension. It is the sheet-anchor of Vedic *Sṛishṭi Vidyā*, viz., the Father-Mother Principle symbolised in many ways as Bull-Cow (*Vṛishabhaścha Dhenuḥ*, RV. 10.5.7), Agni-Soma, Svayambhū-Parmeshṭhī, and Purusha–Virāj, etc.

The second statement about the Mother's attachment to the Father is also significant, namely, that it is the principle of Mind which keeps the male and the female principles together. As said elsewhere, the youthful daughter when impelled by her mental desire, *manīshā*, settles down in a home, i.e. mates with her husband (RV. 5. 47. 1). The Principle of *Kāma* representing the Germ of the Creator's Mind was the first to be produced (*kāmastadagre samavartatādhi manaso retaḥ prathamaṁ yadāsīt*, RV. 10. 129. 4). It is virtually the same as saying that *kāma* is *manasija* or *saṅkalpayoni*, that is mind-born. *Dhīti* and *Manas*, namely, higher thought that is *Vijñāna* or *Buddhi* and the emotional set-up or *Manas*, both combine in the union of the Mother with the Father.

The meaning of the third part of this stanza is a little obscure, but becomes clear by paying attention to Nature's process of Motherhood made manifest in each female. In her period of puberty, some secretions as menstrual flow appear which make her ready for the babe to come in her womb. That is the first stage signified by *Garbha-rasā*. The second stage is indicated by the word *Bībhatsu*, which Wilson following Sāyaṇa translates as 'desirous of progeny' (*garbhabandhanechchhāvatī*), and Griffith as 'the coy dame' in this Mantra, but as 'abhorrent' in RV. 10. 124. 8-9. It is the latter meaning applicable in both cases and brings out the real sense. As soon as the woman has her period, she becomes abhorrent, that is 'not worthy of being touched or seen'; it is the same as *malavadvāsā* of later literature. Waters are spoken of as the Mother, and unless those secretions become turbid, i.e. imbued with the principle of matter which in later language was said to be the *rajasvalā* form of the woman, she can neither conceive nor bring forth. The doctrine of the Muddy Waters is clearly mentioned in the Ṛig Veda (*Bībhatsūnām Apāṁ divyānām*, RV. 10. 124. 9). The abhorrent waters are the Mother-principle in its turbid form, permeated by matter, still in amorphous state, unregulated and unfit for procreation that is, not yet transformed as *Yajña*.

A Yaksha or a Gandharva or a Vṛitra first enters those waters and makes them abhorrent or fearsome, but gradually the Waters, viz. the Mother-principle evolving towards creativity, get rid of that influence and become purified, ready like a mirror to receive the reflection of the Sun, i.e. the Life-principle, *Prāṇa* or *Chidaṁśa* (this phenomenon in later thought is known as *Chidābhāsa*, or the principle of *Chhāyā*). As such the woman is called *Ātreyī*, i.e. under the influence of *Atri*. *Atri* is the name of a Ṛishi but also a kind of *Prāṇa* which is called *Dhāmachchhad*, literally that which intercepts Light. Pure Prāṇic energy is *Adhāmachchhad* and like the transparent glass is not able to reflect the solar rays, but when particles of matter get mingled in it, it becomes a fit medium to mirror an image, i.e. it obtains the quality of *ābhāsa* or reflection. That is what exactly happens in the Mother. The menstrual secretion becomes purified and the woman is ready to receive the Seed from the Sire, from her mate. This is the third stage which is mentioned here as *Nividdhā*, that is, the fertilisation of the Mother's ovum by the spermatozoa or Seed of the Father. As soon as this miracle is accomplished the zygote (or the first ovum with the sperm) starts its embryonic development until it becomes a full matured foetus and wrapped in chorion comes out of the womb as the Miraculous Babe (*Chitra Śiśu*, RV. 10. 1. 2). This is how each child which is the symbol of new life and which represents Nature's technique to perpetuate the Life-principle through countless generations is processed from beginning to end. This was the ancient *Kumāra Vidyā* (see Ś B. 6. 1. 3. 18-20).

We have just referred to the woman in her period as *Ātreyī*. The Śatapatha clearly explains the Atri principle saying that the Gods collected the *retas* which would fecundate *Vāk* or the female principle on a *charma* or skin, and they exclaimed: 'O, it is here!' and thus from '*Atra*' that became *Atri* (ŚB. 1. 4. 5. 13). The skin (*charma*) is the container in which the fertilised ovum finds for itself a world which expands with the growth of the embryo. The Mother's womb which is fit for receiving the semen, *retas*, is imbued with the quality of *Atri* or fecundability.

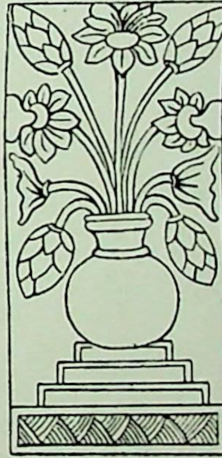
Why are the Waters or the principle of Motherhood looked upon as Abhorrent, *Bībhatsu* ? The answer is that when she conceives, a Yaksha or an unknown spirit (*apūrvaṁ yaksham*) enters her womb carrying within it all the dirt and dross of matter, and turned as Vṛitra that makes one turn away in disdain (*Bībhatsavo apa vṛitrādatishṭhan*, RV. 10. 124. 8). The abhorrent waters of Motherhood have one redeeming feature, namely, that their friend or companion is a Golden Bird, a Haṁsa named Indra who rushes when *Anushṭup Vāk* calls him—*Bībhatsūnāṁ sayujaṁ haṁsamāhurapāṁ divyānāṁ sakhye charantam Anushṭubhamanu charchūryamāṇamindraṁ nichikyuḥ kavayo manīshā*, RV.10.124. 9: 'They call him Haṁsa, the abhorrent floods' companion, moving in friendship with celestial waters. The poets in their thought have looked on Indra swiftly approaching when *Anushṭup* calls him. (Griffith). The Ṛishis discovered the identity of the Golden Haṁsa befriending the Mother-principle or the primeval waters as Indra who according to the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa is *Madhya Prāṇa*, the central Life-principle, which incarnates in each individual body (ŚB. 6. 1. 1. 1-2). It is significantly stated here that Indra as the Golden Haṁsa follows after the *Anushṭup Vāk* as her loving companion. The meaning is that *Anushṭup Vāk* is the principle of Matter comprised of the five elements and Indra as Prāṇa follows it as a matter of course. The whole idea is of the incarnation of the Life-principle in the material body.

In this stanza of the *Asya Vāmīya Sūkta*, the same phenomenon is referred to by saying that the abhorrent Mother was fecundated and then the gods and men came to pay worship to her as *Vāk*. The implication is that the Mother is the perfect symbol of *Vāk* which represents the five elements of matter. *Vāk* is the attribute of *Ākāśa* which is the most subtle of the five material elements and therefore selected as a complete symbol for all of them. The subject of the verb *īyuḥ* is left out but is clear, namely, that all the celestial and earthly powers (*devāḥ manushyāḥ*) bring their offerings (*namasyantaḥ*) to the Woman as Mother when she is pregnant. In the Mother's womb is concealed the entire divine mystery by which the new Babe is produced. All the arts, sciences and philosophies are in Man. 'I reveal unto you this big secret that there is nothing higher than Man'—*guhyaṁ Brahma tadidaṁ*

bravīmi nahi mānushāt śreshṭhataraṁ hi kiñchit, Mbh. Man is the perfect replica of Prajāpati himself—*purushaḥ prajāpatiḥ*, ŚB. 6. 2. 1. 23. Man is imaged after his Maker —*prājāpatyo vai purushaḥ*, ŚB 2. 2. 5. 3.

Since the Motherhood principle is full of such great majesty, all the gods and men come to pay their honour and homage to it. The Mother merits universal adoration and praise.

This lofty rank of the Mother is due to the fact that the Waters in her are imbued with divine potency—*apāṁ divyānām*—and therefore no *Vṛitra* or *Asura* can stand in the way of their irresistible force for manifesting the possibilities of Life.



MANTRA 9

युक्ता मातासीद्धुरि दक्षिणाया अतिष्ठद्गर्भो वृजनीष्वन्तः ।
अमीमेद्वत्सो अनु गामपश्यद्विश्वरूप्यं त्रिषु योजनेषु ॥

—ऋ० वे० १।१६४।९।।

To the Car-pole of the Universal Cow the Motherhood principle was yoked. In all the Daughter-Cows the Womb was deposited.

The Calf lowed and following the Mother Cow upto a distance of three *Yojanas*, came to have a vision of the Omniform Cosmos (*Viśvarūpya*).[9]

There are four arguments in this Mantra :

(1) the Mother was yoked in the vanguard of Dakshiṇā, the Gift Cow;
(2) there was a Babe or embryo within each cow;
(3) the calf measured out his steps and followed the Mother-cow;
(4) he saw all the forms, *viśvarūpya*, by walking a distance of three *yojanas*.

Each one of these is a statement of symbolical meaning. Dakshiṇā is the name of the universal Mother-Cow, Aditi or Virāj. She is the Great Mother, *Mahī Mātā* and therefore it is said that the principle of Motherhood goes with the universal cow. The two are inseparable. Wherever there is the Great Goddess, Motherhood is implied. The Cosmic Yajña finds its fulfilment in Dakshiṇā which is invariably productive of meritorious fruit and is therefore identified with *Mātā*, the principle of Motherhood.

The above statement is true about the Universal Mother, *Mahī Mātā*, but for the sake of generation she incarnates in the form of her Youthful Daughters (RV. 5. 47. 1). The same may be said about the Universal Cow manifesting herself as many cows (*vṛijanīshu*), each of whom carries a babe in her womb. The Great

[9] *Griffith*—Yoked was the Mother to the boon Cow's car-pole ; in the dark rows of clouds the Infant rested.

Then the Calf lowed, and looked upon the Mother, the Cow who wears all shapes in three directions.

Wilson—The mother (sky), was associated in (sustaining) the burthen of the fulfiller of desires (the earth) : the embryo rested within the (womb of the) clouds : thereupon the calf bellowed, and beheld the omniform cow in the three combinations.



Mantra 9—माता त्रिपु योजनेषु Mother in Three Units of Distance

Mother Goddess has become manifest as countless other goddesses for the sake of creation, and each mother is a type of the Great Goddess, the Archetypal Mother. (*yā devī sarvabhūteshu mātṛi-rūpeṇa saṁsthitā*). Unless the Universal descends to the level of the individual there can be no creation.

The idea in the third part of the Mantra is that the Calf in the womb of the Cow so soon as it was delivered, bellowed or uttered cry which is the perfect sign of *Vāk*. Both the Cow and the Calf are said to have the quality of uttering, *Vāk* (*gaur-amīmed anuvatsaṁ mishantam*, RV. 1. 164. 28); *amīmed vatso anu gām*, RV. 1. 164. 9). It is the same thing as saying that the Cow and the Calf or the Mother and the Babe reflect their mutual glory, and the one is as perfect a symbol of Vāk or material manifestation as the other. This is the great truth of Nature's plan which is being fulfilled in each new generation in which Life begets life—*agnināgniḥ samidhyate*. The root *mā* may be taken in two ways, 'bellowing' and 'measuring' (*mā śabde, mā māne*) and both meanings are equally valid, for the extent of the sound of bellowing of the Cow or the Calf indicates the extent of her movement for pasturage. The whole world is the pasture for the grazing of the Cow. The principle of measuring out is basic to manifestation. The cosmos as a Yajña is conceived as a 'measuring out of the principle of *Rajas* or movement'—*rajaso vimānaḥ*. This idea of the lowing of the Cow equated with her taking foot-steps is well known in the Ṛig-Veda : (*vṛikshevṛikshe niyatā mīmayadgauḥ*, RV. 10. 27. 22). As a matter of fact,the transcendent *Vāk* called *Sahasrāksharā* or the Thousand-syllabled One exists in the Highest Empyrean, *Parame Vyoman* (RV. 1. 146. 41), but for the sake of manifestation she is measured out as of two syllables, *dvipadī*, four syllables, *chatushpadī*, eight syllables, *ashṭāpadī*, and nine syllables, *navapadī*. *Akshara* is the unit of utterance of speech or (which is the same as) the footstep of the Cow.

The Calf does two things. It bellows and sees, referring to the two functions of light and sound usually taken as typical of Prāṇa (cf. RV. 10. 125. 4, *mayā so annamatti yo vipaśyati yaḥ prāṇiti ya īṁ śṛiṇotyuktam*). The Cow and the Calf bellow and see an equal distance and that is three yojanas. These are three units of distance to which travelling is necessary in order to become informed about the omniform nature of the Cosmos(*viśvarūpyaṁ trishu yojaneshu*).What was called *Viśvarūpa* was three-headed, *Triśiras*, each head being a form, and therefore basically there are only three forms, whatever be their multiple nature in manifestation. These three forms are those created by Mind, Life and Matter. These are the three worlds filled with their respective forms, *rūpa*. The taking of the three steps by the Cow and her calf typified as the three yojanas is taken as a spatial conception, but may also equally be a stepping in depth, namely, the three states of consciousness as

Jāgrat, *Svapna* and *Sushupti*, or for the matter of that, the whole doctrine of *Trayī Vidyā* may be brought into the picture. The simple reason is that Sūrya is the Calf who is the symbol of *Trayī Vidyā* and who is not only brought into being but also sustained by Infinite Nature as the Universal Cow named *Virāj*. In the three strides of the Calf or the Cow, of Vishṇu or the Sun, are comprehended the three categories of forms created by Manas, Prāṇa and Vāk respectively. In Vedic symbolim, cosmic manifestation is a *Yajña*, having several names, e. g. *Viśvarūpya Yajña, Kāmapra Yajña, Viśvadānīṁ Yajña, Sarvahut Yajña, Sahasra-Saṁvatsara Yajño, Viśvadeva Yajña, Prājāpatya Yajña, Trivṛit Yajña, Vishṇu Yajña,* etc.



MANTRA 10

तिस्रो मातॄस्त्रीन्पितॄन्बिभ्रदेक ऊर्ध्वस्तंस्थौ नेमव ग्लापयन्ति ।
मन्त्रयंन्ते दिवो अमुष्यं पृष्ठे विंश्वविदं वाचमविंश्वमिन्वाम् ॥

—ऋ० वे० १।१६४।१०॥

The One (*Aja*), supporting Three Mothers and Three Fathers, stands erect : They never can make him weary.

There on the ridge of Heaven they deliberate about Speech which has knowledge of the Cosmos and which impels that which is beyond the Cosmos.[10]

This Mantra refers to Three Mothers and Three Fathers, i.e. three Parental Pairs, one each for creating the three categories of Mind, Life and Matter or the triadic pattern of creativity. We have discussed under Mantra 6 the conception of the seven Lokas comprising the three heavens and the three earths supported on the one transcendent or Unborn Principle known as *Aja*, *Avyaya*, *Svayambhū*, *Satya* or *Ekam* which is here called Ūrdhva, 'the upper one'. It is not a spatial conception, but Ū*rdhva* is the same as *Nābhi* (the Centre), *Amṛitam* (the immortal principle), *Sthāṇu* (the fixed point). In Mantra 6 the one (*Ekam*) supports the six *rajāṁsi* or *lokas*. Here also the One is said to be the support of three Fathers and three Mothers; and is fixed as *Axis Mundi*, or the Pillar of the Universe, which never gives way or falters in time and space (*ūrdhvastasthau nemava glāpayanti*). The three pairs of Parents meaning the whole triadic cosmos with its countless millions of worlds are unable to shake or make weary the one which supports them. This idea of the over-all majesty of the undifferentiated transcendent principle is fundamental to the Vedic scheme of cosmology or cosmogony. Brahman himself is that Absolute Centre or Source of all creation.

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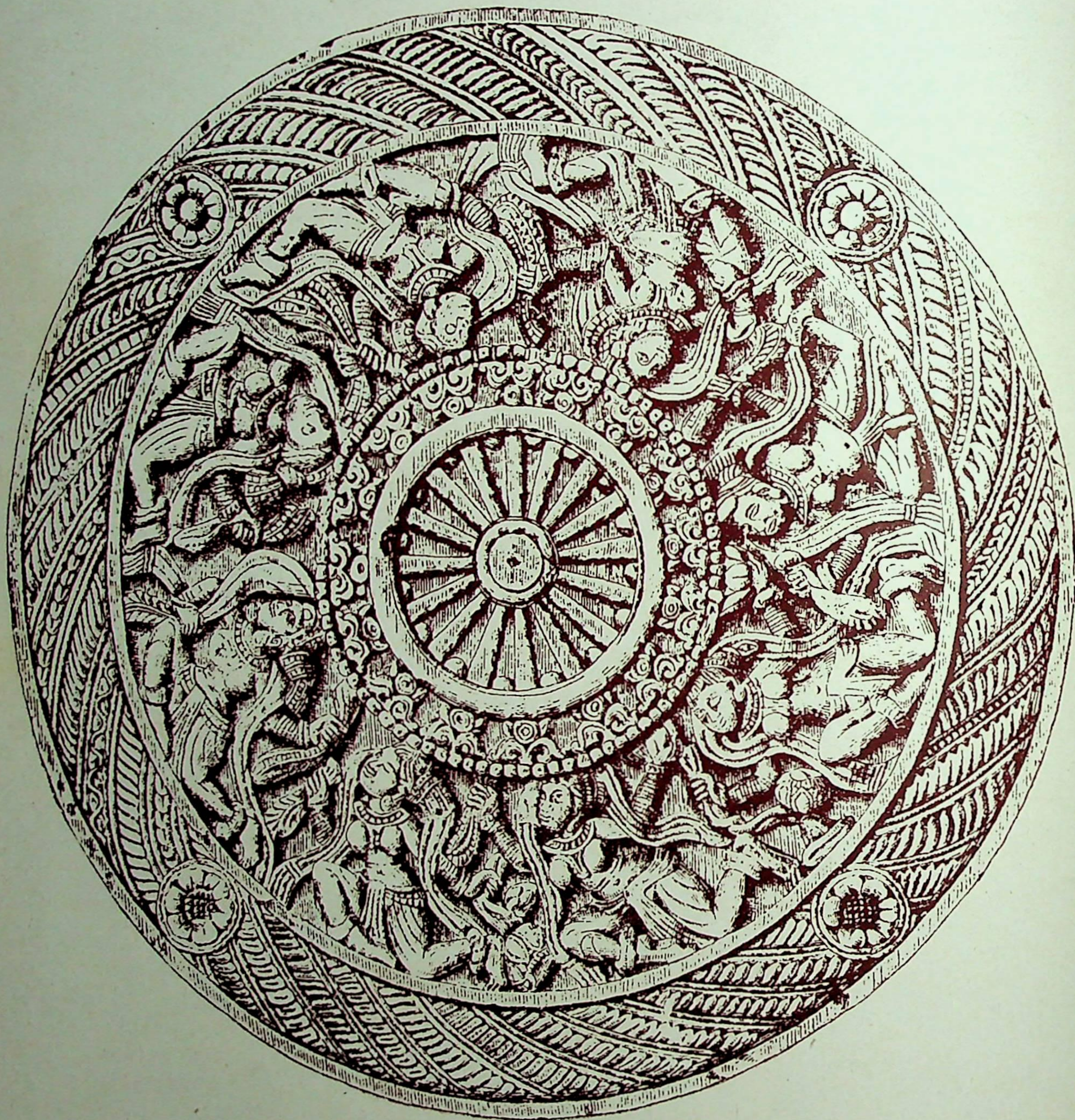
[10] *Griffith*—Bearing three Mothers and three Fathers, single he stood erect : They never make him weary.

There on the pitch of heaven they speak together in speech all-knowing but not all-impelling.

Wilson—The one sole (sun), having three mothers and three fathers, stood on high : none ever over-weary him : the (gods) on the summit of the sky take counsel respecting him in language all-comprehending, (but) not extending to all.

In the second line of the verse is the idea that the three Parents sit in deliberation on the ridge of yonder heaven (*mantrayante divo amushya prishṭhe*). The ridge of heaven, *divasprishṭha* or *nākaprishṭha* is the middle point between immortal heaven and mortal earth, i.e. between *Prāṇa* and *Bhūta*, or Life and Matter. Mother Earth and Father Heaven meet at that point. They hold counsel with regard to the bringing forth of creation. It is at first a kind of *manana* or *mantra*, i.e. manifestation on the level of Mind, and then descending to that of *Prāṇa*, and *Bhūṭa*. The subject of their thought is *Vāk*, viz. how the unmanifest *Vāk* as *Prāṇa* may become transformed into manifest *Vāk* as Matter. The manifest *Vāk* is *Viśva* or cosmos of which the Parents have knowledge and which they discuss in their counsel. The unmanifest *Vāk* is the reverse of *Viśva* and therefore called *Aviśva*, that which is not the cosmos, i.e. the transcendent principle from which the cosmos originates. That is impelled or agitated by the deliberation of the Parents and the entire process of creation is thereby set in motion. The translations of Griffith and Wilson are not intelligible. The relative meaning of *Viśva* and *Aviśva* becomes quite clear if the one is taken as the opposite of the other. *Viśva* is movement (*gati*) and *Aviśva* or the Source is stasis (*sthiti*). We may in this connection think of the two other terms, namely, *parārdha* and *avarārdha* as the two halves, one of which is identified with *Viśva* (*ardhena viśvaṁ bhuvanaṁ jajāna*, AV. 10. 8. 13, 11. 4. 12) and the other as the Unknown Half (*katamaḥ ardhaḥ, kaṁsvidardham*, RV. 1. 164. 17). This conception of the one egg split into two halves forms an essential plank of the *Parāvara* doctrine referred to in Mantras 17-19 of this Sūkta.





Mantra 11—वर्वर्ति चक्रं नहि तज्जराय   The Ageless Wheel Revolves

MANTRA 11

द्वादशारं नहि तज्जराय वर्वर्ति चक्रं परि द्यामृतस्य ।
आ पुत्रा अग्ने मिथुनासो अत्र सप्त शतानि विंशतिश्च तस्थुः ॥

—ऋ० वे० १।१६४।११॥

The Wheel of Twelve Spokes does not decay, revolving round the Heaven of Cosmic Order (*Ṛita*).

On this are established, O Agni, Seven Hundred and Twenty Sons of yours, joined together in pairs.[11]

The imagery of the Wheel is described above in Mantras 2 and 3 and below 12, 13, 14 and 48. This is the twelve-spoked Wheel of Time, namely, *Saṁvatsara*, as taken by all commentators. It is decayless and unaging (*nahi tajjarāya*) and moving without friction, does not ever stop, and its revolving force goes on for ever (*varvarti*). It is revolving round the heaven of *Ṛita*, that is *Parameshṭhi* or the Universal. This Time-Wheel is Sūrya or Sun which is revolving in the lap of the Universal or *Ṛita*. The solar wheel is on the manifest plane but it derives its gyrating movement from the Unmanifest Universal. If we may translate the manifest dynamic movement as *śukla Rajas*, then its source in the Unmanifest Principle of Rest is named *kṛishṇa* Rajas. Sūrya is itself white *rajas*, but the source of its energy which is impelling it on its course is black *rajas* (RV. 1. 35. 2) i.e. Darkness or the Principle of Night (*Rātri*) which is the substratum and source of the manifest world (*jagato niveśanī*, RV. 1. 35. 1).

The dynamism that is behind the revolving Wheel of Time is due to the duality of Night and Day, which are both sons of Agni. There are three hundred and sixty days and three hundred and sixty nights spoken of as seven hundred and twenty sons of Agni (*Mithunāsaḥ putrāḥ*). Agni is Prajāpati whose dual aspect as Heat

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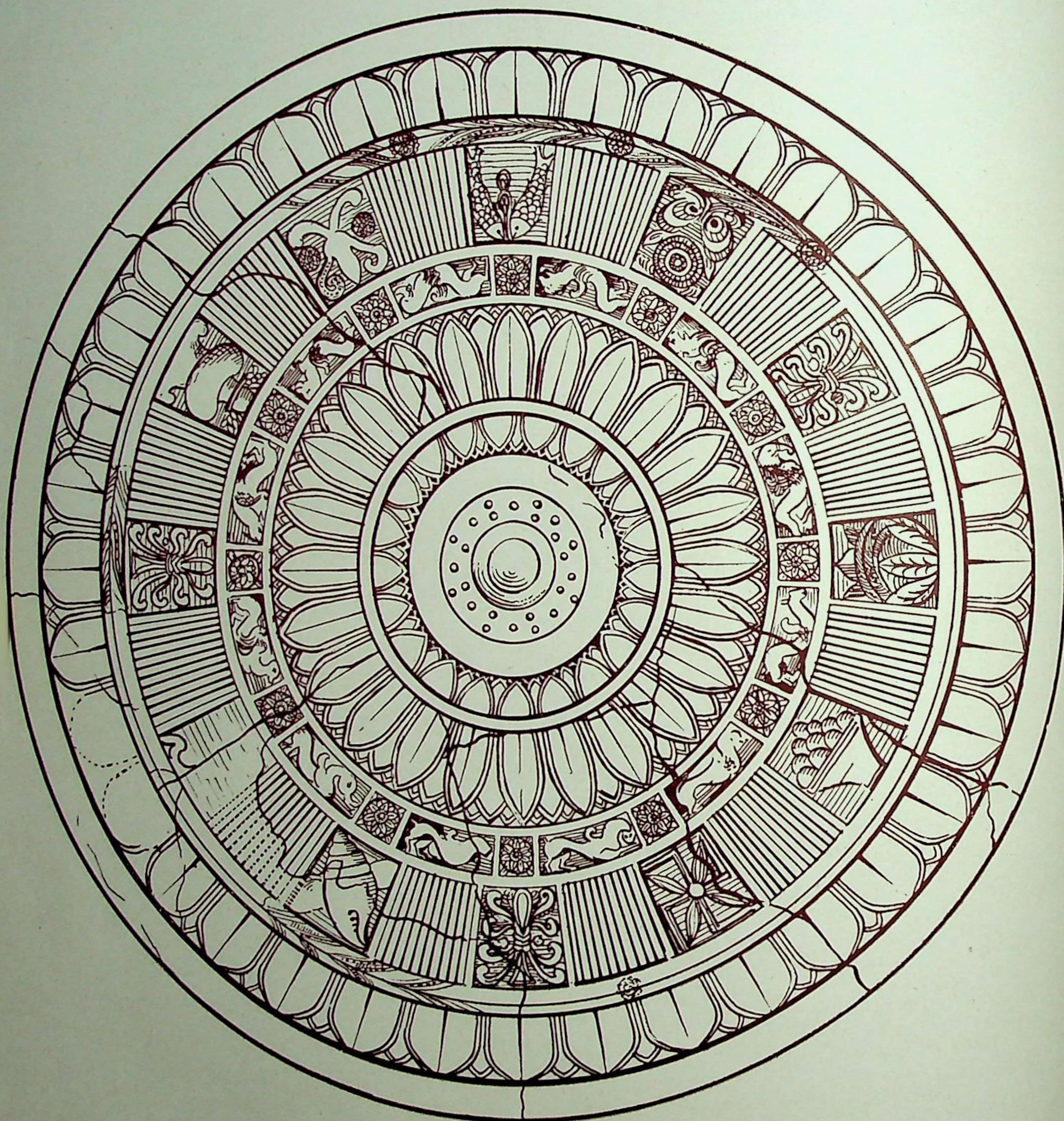
[11] *Griffith*—Formed with twelve spokes, by length of time unweakened, rolls round the heaven this wheel of during Order.

Herein established, joined in pairs together, seven hundred Sons and twenty stand, O Agni.

Wilson—The twelve-spoked wheel of the true (sun) revolves round the heavens, and never (tends) to decay ; seven hundred and twenty children in pairs, Agni, abide in it.

and Cold (*Ghramsa and Hima*), as Night and Day (*Ahorātra*) is the root cause of tension which explodes into the dynamism of the universe. On the basis of the dictum *Atmā vai jāyate putraḥ*, each unit of Night and Day (*Ahorātra*) is a perfect form of Agni as the exemplar of the contraction and expansion implied in creation. It is like the going up and coming down of the Wheel (*Udgrābha* and *Nigrābha*) or an epitome of the cosmic cycle.





Mantra 12—द्वादशाकृति पिता

Father with Twelve Faces

MANTRA 12

पञ्चपादं पितरं द्वादशाकृतिं दिव आहुः परे अर्धे पुरीषिणम् ।
अथेमे अन्य उपरे विचक्षणं सप्तचक्रे षळर आहुरर्पितम् ॥

—ऋ० वे० १।१६४।१२॥

The Five-footed Father, having Twelve faces, is said to exist in the Upper Half of Heaven, having wealth of watery-stores.

These others speak of Him as on high with distant vision, mounted on the Seven-wheeled and Six-spoked Car below.[12]

The Mantra takes up the same imagery of the Wheel of Divine Order personified as the five-footed and twelve-faced Father who exists in the Upper Half (*Para-Ardha*) and whose name is *Purīshin,* i. e. wealthy in watery stores. The Father is the Year, *Saṁvatsara,* with five seasons of seventy-two days each regulating its movement. The twelve faces are comparable to the twelve -spokes of Mantra 11 and typify the twelve months of the Year, each one of which is a changing unit of Time. All the climatic appearances witnessed during the year from month to month are compared to the twelve faces of Father Time. This corresponds to the idea of the Twelve Ādityas.

In the second part of this stanza two ideas require explanation. The first is the conception of *Parārdha* which signifies the unmanifest source in relation to the *Avarārdha* which is this cosmos, as we have just explained under Mantra 11.

The word *Purīshin* occurs several times in the Ṛig Veda, e.g. the monsoon winds coming from the ocean and bringing rain called *Purīshiṇaḥ* (i.e. rich in waters) (RV. 5. 55. 5). This is a reference to Parameshṭhī, Lord of the Ocean of Ṛita or the primeval flood. The idea is that of *Parameshṭhī* as the Universal and Sūrya

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[12]*Griffith*—They call him in the further half of heaven the Sire five-footed, of twelve forms, wealthy in watery store.

These others say that he, God with far-seeing eyes, is mounted on the lower seven-wheeled, six-spoked car.

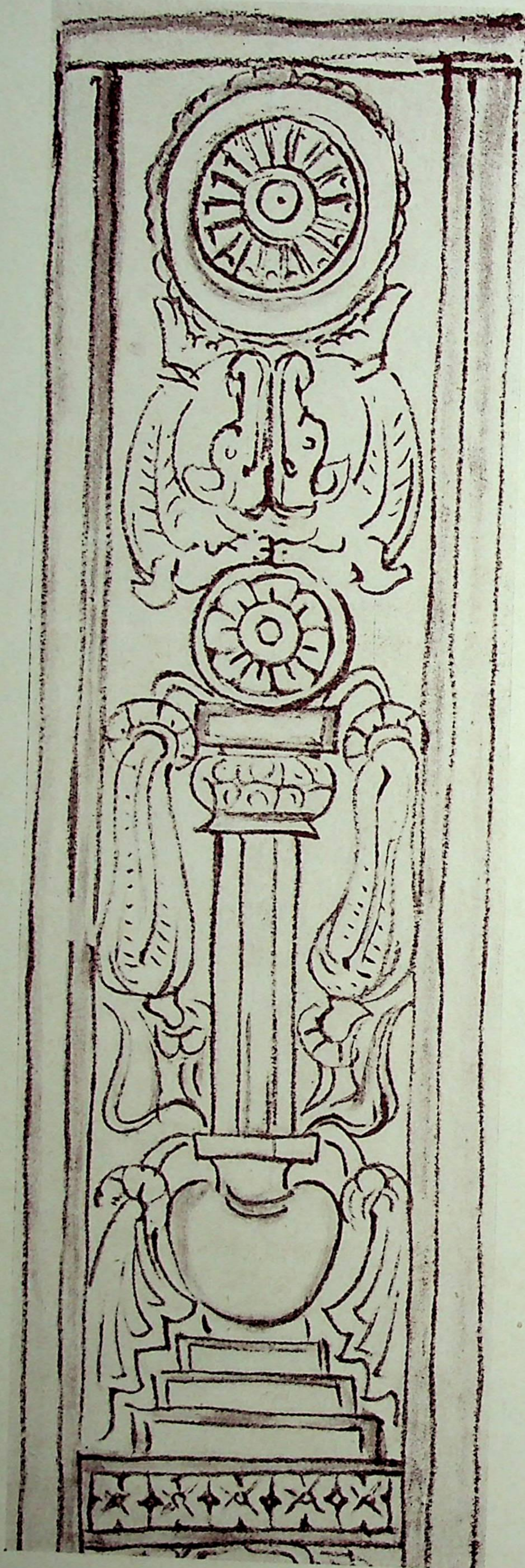
Wilson—They have termed the five-footed, twelve-formed parent, Purīshin, when in the further hemisphere of the sky : and others have termed him Arpita, when in the hither (portion of the sky) ; shining in his seven-wheeled (car), each (wheel) having six spokes.

or Indra as the individual being symbolised as Father and Son, as clearly stated in the Śatapatha (*sa parameshṭhī Indraṁ putram abravīt*, ŚB. 11. 1. 6. 18). *Saṁvatsara* as Sūrya or son (*putra*) is moving with its five feet in the lower half, but he as Father has his abode in the upper half, the unmanifest universal or ocean of *Ṛita*. Elsewhere it is said that Sūrya took its birth from the ocean (*atrā samudra āgūaḍhaṁ sūryamā-jabhartana*, RV. 10. 72. 7). Sūrya is Agni and Agni is the son of Waters—*apāṁ napāt*. Agni is Satya and depends for its life on *Ṛita* or *Soma* or *Parameshṭhī* or the Ocean which is churned to produce the *Vāḍavāgni*, or the fiery energy which lives in the ocean and which becomes the consort of Sūrya. When the latter mates with her as a horse, she becomes a mare, a legend well known in the Ṛig Veda (10. 17. 1-2) and also in Greek mythology where God Poseidon was the divine Horse, the wide-gallopping Stallion named Hippios, who fell in love with the Goddess of the Earth, who in fear changed herself into a Mare, thinking to escape but the God turned himself into a stallion, pursued and loved her.

The conception of *Ṛita* or the region of *Parameshṭhtī*, the universal as the substratum of the manifest world is basic to Vedic cosmogony and is the fountain-head of many ideas.

The Father is said to have been conceived by those who were superior in knowledge to possess seven wheels and six spokes, which is an oft-repeated description applicable to the solar car. The idea of the seven wheels (*sapta chakra*) has been explained above under Mantra 3. The Father of five feet and twelve faces is one way of saying what others alternatively state as having seven wheels and six spokes, both referring to Time or *Saṁvatsara*. Both statements form part of the doctrine of time, *Kāla Vāda*. Sāyaṇa translated *upara* as *Saṁvatsara*.





Mantra 13—पूर्णकुम्भोऽधि काल आहितः Time-Wheel and Full Jar

MANTRA 13

पञ्चा॑रे च॒क्रे प॑रि॒वर्त॑माने॒ तस्मि॒न्ना त॑स्थु॒र्भुव॑नानि॒ विश्वा॑ ।
तस्य॒ नाक्ष॑स्तप्यते॒ भूरि॑भारः स॒नादे॒व न शी॑र्यते॒ सना॑भिः ॥
—ऋ० वे० १।१६४।१३।।

Upon this revolving Wheel of Five Spokes, all the worlds are supported.

Although heavily laden, it never gets hot-axled. Its nave has from ancient times remained unbroken.[13]

In this Mantra the imagery of the Time Wheel is continued in even more explicit terms. The Wheel is said to have five spokes (*pañchāra*) which invokes the various Pentads of Vedic symbolism. The Brāhmaṇa writers often mention the basic constitution of the cosmos as a Pentadic Yajña (*pāṅkto Yajñaḥ*, ŚB. 1. 5. 2. 16, 3. 1. 4. 20; GB. 1. 4. 24; AB. 1. 5, 3. 23; etc). The Aitareya B. clearly states that there are many groups of five, e.g. the five *Paśus* (animals) which exemplify the five-fold *Yajña* (*te yat pañchānyad bhūtvā kalpetām tasmād āhuḥ pāṅkto yajñaḥ, pāṅktāḥ paśava iti*, AB. 3. 23, GB. 2. 3. 20). Obviously with reference to the Time Wheel as *Saṁvatsara*, the five spokes are the five seasons of 72 days each (*pañcha ṛitavaḥ saṁvatsarasya*, ŚB. 3. 4. 4. 17, 2. 5. 2. 16). But the Wheel is the archetypal pattern of the whole cosmos in which the five modalities of *Svayambhū, Parameshṭhī, Sūrya, Chandra* and *Pṛithivī* represent the five spokes of the revolving Wheel. It is the great *Pañcha-rātra* sacrifice of *Mahā-Purusha Nārāyaṇa* (*Purusho ha Nārāyaṇo akāmayata, ati tishṭheyaṁ sarvāṇi bhūtāni ahamevedaṁ sarvaṁ syāmiti, taṁetaṁ purushaṁedhaṁ pañcha-rātraṁ yajñakratumapaśyat tam āharat, tenāyajata*, ŚB. 13. 5. 11). It is clearly stated that the *Saṁvatsara* is the image of the Creator, and as creator Prajāpati is five-fold, so is *Saṁvatsara* (*sa aikshata prajāpatiḥ, imaṁ vā ātamanaḥ pratimāmasṛikshi yat saṁvatsaramiti, tasmādāhuḥ prajāpatiḥ saṁvatsaraḥ ityātmano hyetāṁ pratimāṁ asṛijata*, ŚB. 11. 1. 6. 13). It is also stated in continuation that that Prajāpati was named Parameshṭhī, the universal or *Mahat* principle of formless manifestation. His

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[13] *Griffith*—Upon this five-spoked wheel revolving ever all living creatures rest and are dependent. Its axle heavey-laden, is not heated ; the nave from ancient times remains unbroken.

Wilson—All beings abide in this five-spoked revolving wheel ; the heavily loaded axle is never heated ; its external compact nave is never worn away.

Father was *Svayambhū*, the Unmanifest source of creation; his son was Indra, i.e. Sūrya and his two scions were Agni and Soma, Agni as the Eater of Food, *Annāda*, and Soma as Food, *Anna*. These five are the deities of the Wishfulling Yajña conceived by Prajāpati in his Mind and therefore, rightly named as *Kāmapra* (*tā vā etāḥ Pañcha devatā ètena kāmapreṇa yajñenāyajanta*, ŚB. 11. 1. 6. 17-20).

The same phenomenon holds good in the human body, which is a Yajña (*Purusho Yajñaḥ*, ŚB. 3. 1. 4. 23) and which is truly constituted of as many Pentads as there may be in the cosmos, e.g. the five *Prāṇas*, the five organs of sense, the five organs of action, the five sheaths (*pañcha kośa*); these are verily the spokes which support the Wheel and by their turning produce the rotation which is the Life of the Wheel. A wheel is the symbol of movement (*Parivartana*, *Gati*). The wheel is dead if it does not move; when the wheel moves, it carries forward the burden of that which is conceived in the creative scheme of the cosmos in terms of movement. All that comes naturally within the field of force generated by the wheel; the Cosmos itself is the Gaint Wheel which is revolving for ever under the pressure of the dynamic Time Principle which is symbolically spoken of as the Horse yoked to the Wheel. In plain words it is said several times, e.g. in Mantras 2, 13 and 14, that all the countless worlds are supported on this revolving Wheel.

The third part of the stanza is beautifully worded in an almost modern scientific terminology stating that the wheel bearing the burden of the cosmos is overladen (*bhūribhāraḥ*), but in spite of that it is never hot-axled (*nākshastapyate*) or becomes smoky due to friction. All movements within human experience on the plane of matter generate heat because of friction, but in the Cosmic Wheel whose navel (*nābhi*) or centre (*hṛidaya*) is immortal and linked with the divine Creator, there is no friction and therefore no ceasing of the movement, and that is why this Wheel although manifesting in the relative units of Time, is in itself governed by timeless and ageless Ordinances. It is poetically compared to a Full Vase overflowing with Waters of Immortality (*amṛita kalaśa*). The next virtue of the Wheel is that is nave has not creaked or fissured from the most ancient times, a graphic description of the World-Wheel (*Brahmāṇḍa-Chakra*) or of the Time-Wheel (*Kāla-Chakra*) that this gyrating Giant (*Ajita Mahā-Chakra*, *Sahasrāra Chakra*) retains its dynamic power, buoyancy and freshness for ever. The scientist and the philosopher both look in wonderment at the Unknown Mystery which is impelling into motion the countless universes of stars and constellations, of galaxies and milky-ways, of the spiral nebuli and what in one word is known as the Giant *Kāla-Nemi* or *Tārakāmaya Maṇḍala* (the Great Circle of Stars) in the Purāṇas. The staggering depths of Time and Space belong to the navel of the Wheel and their unfoldment according to primeval Ordinances is this Cosmos, with perfection writ large on its visage everywhere.

MANTRA 14

सनेमि चक्रमजरं वि वावृत उत्तानायां दश युक्ता वहन्ति ।
सूर्यस्य चक्षू रजसैत्यावृतं तस्मिन्नार्पिता भुवनानि विश्वा ॥

—ऋ० वे० १।१६४।१४॥

The Wheel revolves, unwasting, with its felly. Ten Horses draw it, yoked to the far-stretching Car-pole.

The Solar Eye encompassed by *Rajas*, moves : on him are supported all the worlds.[14]

This Mantra continues the symbolism of the Cosmic Wheel (*Jagat Chakra*, Atmānanda) which is described as undecaying (*ajara*) and furnished with a felly (*nemi*) which is the same as the encircling *Maṇḍala* or the principle of *Tejo Maṇḍala*, the aura of Light which is symbolised as the Sāma Veda (*sarvaṁ tejaḥ sāma-rūpyaṁ ha śaśvat*, TB. 3. 12. 9. 1; *Sāmamayaṁ tejaḥ*, GB. 1. 2. 9.). The Wheel is revolving (*vivāvṛita*). It may be noted that the cyclic movement is denoted by several terms in the Ṛig Veda, e.g. *āvartamāna* (RV. 1. 35. 2), *parivartamāna* (1. 164. 13), and *vivartamāna* (1. 164. 14). If one likes one may enter into philosophical subtlety to extract different implications of these terms, as Atmānanda has done to interpret the last as referring to the doctrine of *Vivarta* as against that of *Pariṇāma*. But we think it better to keep off this line of argument.

The second quarter of the verse contains an important statement, namely, that the ten are bearing the Recumbent (*uttānā*). Griffith translates it as the 'far-stretching car-pole' and Wilson following Sāyaṇa, as the 'upper surface' (*upari vistṛitā bhūmi*). Sāyaṇa, however, also gives the meaning of the expanded car-pole. Ātmānanda in his usual manner refers it to the Brahma doctrine (*ūrdhva Brahma-Vidyā*). But the real meaning as enjoined by the Ṛig Veda itself can be understood only with re-

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[14] *Griffith*—The wheel revolves, unwasting, with its felly : ten draw it, yoked to the far-stretching car-pole.

The Sun's eye moves encompassed by the region : on him dependent rest all living creatures.

Wilson—The even-fellied, undecaying wheel, repeatedly revolves ; ten united on the upper surface, bear (the world): the orb of the sun proceeds, invested with water, and in it are all beings deposited.

ference to the *Uttāna* doctrine. Once Sūrya is called Uttānapāda, which creates the Earth (*Bhūrjajña Uttānapādaḥ*, RV. 10. 72. 4). The second reference to *Uttāna* is for the Earth as here; the third reference is to both the Parents, viz. Father Heaven and Mother Earth being recumbent to each other, like two inverted Bowls facing each other (*uttānayośchamvor-yonirantaḥ*, RV 1. 164. 33). There is one *Yoni* in the Mother and one in the Father, and when the two combine to form a single womb, the *Garbha* is produced. In this Mantra the word *Uttānā* is for the Earth, symbolising the principle of Motherhood and lying recumbent to receive the Seed of the Father. The connection between this line and the previous one is obvious, viz. the Ṛishi, thinking of the revolution of the Wheel and of its *Maṇḍala* or *Nemi*, is led to think of the two principles which constitute the centre of the Wheel or the Circle, and the periphery, the former as Father and the latter as Mother. The Centre is the symbol of the principle of Rest and the Mother of Motion, for it is only the oscillating circumference which is the measure of the expanding Circle, *Mātā* (=Measure or *Mātrā*). The Father deposits the germ in the womb of the Mother, but it is the Mother who determines the measuring units of the Babe; for example, the measure of the ant and of the elephant is due to the Mother's Womb which acts as the mould for casting the physical form.

The question is to the dynamic oscillation of the Mother-principle which determines these different measures and also the revolution of the Wheel in different dimensions. Whatever be the size, the impelling force is one and the same and derives from an identical cause. The question is about the nature and source of that Energy of propulsion. The Ṛishi answers it in a simple way, namely, that there are ten horses yoked to the Mother which draw the Wheel. Here we take the word *Yukta* in its natural sense, but who are these ten Horses ? The answer is definite, according to Vedic symbolism, namely, they are the ten constituents of Virāj (*daśākshharā vai Virāj*, ŚB. 1. 1. 1. 22; AB. 6. 20; GB. 1. 4. 24, 2. 18. 6; Tāṇḍya, 3. 13. 3). *Virāj* is the same as *Mahat* or the Universal, also called *Mahad Brahma*, or *Mahad Yoni* (Gitā, 14. 3). *Virāj* is the same as *Parameshṭhī* and the first to be created by *Svayambhū*, the self-existent Father-principle as stated in the Ṛig Veda (*tasmād virāḍajāyata*, RV. 10. 90. 5). By the two primeval Parents i.e. Self-existent *Svayambhū* and Universal *Virāṭ* is produced *Hiraṇya Garbha*, called the *adhipurusha*, the individual Person, whether as Agni on the human plane, or as Sūrya on the cosmic plane (*Virājo adhi pūrushaḥ*, RV. 10. 90. 5).

The ten constitutents of Virāj are stated in the Gopatha as (1) *Loka* (2) *Deva*, (3) *Devagaṇa*. (4) *Chhandas* (5) *Diśaḥ*. (6) *Ṛitu*, (7) *Stoma* (8) *Veda*, (9) *Hotṛi*, and (10) *Indriya*; (GB. 1. 5. 15-20; see also Madhusudan Ojha, '*Maharshi-Kula-*

Vaibhava, p. 227, explaining the ten elements of *Virāj* as *Prāṇa, Devatā, Ṛitu, Dik, Chhandas, Stoma, Pṛishṭha, Sāma, Graha* and *Ṛishi*).

When these ten principles come together, the Self becomes manifest as Life in Matter (*saṁhitoyam ātmā yajñapurushaḥ sampadyate,* Ojha—'*Devatā-Nivit*', p. 51). These ten principles are symbolised as Ten Sisters (RV. 3. 29. 13, 10. 93. 1, *daśa śvasāraḥ*) and also as the ten intrinsic powers (*daśa svadhā*, RV. 10. 92. 4). The principle of *Loka* refers to the triad of *Pṛithivī*, *Antariksha* and *Dyauḥ* which must be present for *Prāṇa* taking a material body. The Ṛig Veda itself says that as soon as *Virāj* produced its *Purusha* the latter needed a pair of *Dyāvā-Pṛithivī* (*sa jāto atyarichyata paśchād bhūmimatho puraḥ*, RV. 10. 90. 5). Earth behind and Heaven in before is the formula of procreation.

The second element of Virāj is *Deva* representing the heavenly and earthly powers known as *Viśvedevāḥ* (also *Divya Pārthiva Indriya*, VS. 7.3.), which should be present at each centre of individual manifestation.

The third principle is entitled *Deva-Gaṇaḥ*, the hosts of Devas, which means the eight *Vasus*, eleven *Rudras*, twelve *Ādityas* and two *Aśvins*, making a team and constituted as a *Chakra* of three fellies as it were, joined together by the two *Aśvins* and having their source in the thirty-fourth component which is *Chatustriṁśa* Prajāpati himself, the Unmanifest source of the power of the Manifest Wheel.

The fourth element of *Chhandas* or rhythm is self-explanatory, which should be present as the basis of the movement of the Cosmic pendulum. It is well said that cosmisation is rhythmisation. The three metres, *Gāyatrī, Trishṭup* and *Jagatī*, of which Dīrghatamas speaks later in this hymn, are but symbolical statements of the underlying cosmic measured and regulated movement.

The principle of *Dik* or the cardinal points refers to the fourfold pattern of the Cosmos (*chatushṭayaṁ vā idaṁ sarvam*) as exemplified in a number of tetradic groups.

The principle of *Ṛitu* is essential for manifestation of *Prāṇa*. *Agni* is found in two forms, namely, *ṛita* and *satya*; each unit of *ṛita* which has no centre or fixed point and is therefore, formless, must become integrated into an ordered system which then makes up the *ṛitu*, the season or the proper fisture of time when the energy can become effective. Each potential source finds its fulfilment or gives expression to its hidden possibilities in its appropriate *ṛitu*. The ripening of the seed in the fruit or in the Father and Mother principles is governed by the same law of *Ṛitu*.

The principle of *Stoma* signifies stock-piling. Life is *Prāṇa-Agni* and starts from a spark to burst into full conflagration. Unless it has the quality of *Stoma*, it will not be able to keep together in its own centre the *Prāṇa* that is being produced

every day. The *Stoma* doctrine is related to that of *Vashaṭkāra*, that is the manifestation of the centre comprised of the activism of the *akshara devas*, Brahmā, Indra and Vishṇu into five other concentric sheaths, known as *trivṛit, pañchadaśa, ekaviṁśa, saptaviṁśa* and *trayastriṁśa Stomas*, which symbolise the five physical sheaths of matter round a *Prāṇic* centre. *Vashaṭkāra* is spoken of as a divine chalice, a *devapātra* in which the *Prāṇic* energy is contained (*Prāṇo vai Vashaṭkāraḥ*, ŚB. 4. 2. 1. 29). It is in fact the same *Prāṇa* principle becoming concrete as *Yajña* through the *Stomas* (*Prāṇā vai Stomāḥ*, ŚB. 8. 4. 1. 3; *yadu ha kiñcha devāḥ kurvate stomenaiva tat kurvate, yajño vai Stomo yajñenaiva tat kurvate*, ŚB. 8. 4. 3. 2).

The eighth component of Virāj is the principle of *Veda*, which is the symbol of *Trayī Vidyā*, the triadic doctrine on the one hand and of the Ṛishi principle on the other. The Ṛishis are defined in the *Śatapatha* as the Prāṇic energies which exist in the beginning of craticon as *Asat*, and then diversified as Seven in the manifest world.

The ninth element of Virāj is the *Hotraka*, namely, the four or seven priests essential for the performance of Yajña.

The tenth principle is that of *Indriya* or the instruments of Prāṇic manifestation through which Indra (=*Madhya Prāṇa*, ŚB. 6. 1. 1. 2.) functions in the conscious state.

Wherever there is Motherhood, these ten essential elements of Virāj are present as constituting the *Yoni* or the Womb of the Mother, and similarly the Seed or *Retas* of the Father. It is to these ten dynamic elements of manifestation that a reference is made in this Mantra.

The third part of this stanza refers to the Eye of Sūrya, moving with the power of *Rajas* or as being encompassed by the *Rajas* or the Lokas. The Eye of Sūrya is Sūrya himself as functioning in the conscious or manifest world and the power by which it works is said to be *rajas* or the principle of motion (cf. RV. 1. 35. 2—*ā kṛishṇena rajasā vartamānaḥ*). The Sun is at the midpoint of the conscious and sub-conscious worlds, namely, of *mṛityu and amṛita* (*niveśayann amṛitaṁ martyaṁ cha*) or of Life and Matter. It is said that what exists on this side of Sūrya is encompassed by *mṛityu* and that which is beyond is *amṛitam* (ŚB. 10. 5. 1. 4).

Sūrya is the principle of *trayī vidyā* (*trayī vā eshā vidyā tapati*, ŚB. 10. 5. 2. 2) and as such is spoken of as the Great Eye of Varuṇa, Mitra and Agni (*chakshurmitrasya varuṇasyāgneḥ*). Sūrya is the visible Eye of the transcendent Creator (*chakshoḥ sūryo ajāyata*, RV. 10. 90. 13).

The Brāhmaṇas explain the Eye as being the symbol of the triadic pattern of creation represented in its three portions, white, black and red (*trivṛid vai chakshuḥ śuklaṁ kṛishṇaṁ lohitaṁ iti*, KB. 3. 5). The triple cosmos is the Eye of Sūrya, opening and closing by the dual function of Prāṇa as contraction and expansion.

MANTRA 15

साकंजानां सप्तथमाहुरेकजं षळिद्यमा ऋषयो देवजा इति।
तेषामिष्टानि विहितानि धामशः स्थात्रे रेजन्ते विकृतानि रूपशः ॥

—ऋ० वे० १।१६४।१५॥

Of the Seven Sākañja Prāṇas, the Seventh is named the Single born (*Ekajam*). The Six are twins, the Ṛishis born of the Gods.

Their sacrifices are ranged, each in its proper position. Modified in various forms they move on a fixed substratum (*sthāte*).[15]

The Mantra describes the seven *Sākañja Prāṇas*, i. e. the seven diver sified prāṇic energies from one original source which are known as the seven sages (*sapta viprāḥ*), or the seven differentiated Ṛishis (*virūpāsaḥ ṛishayaḥ*, RV. 10. 62. 5), or the seven sons of one Aṅgiras (10. 62. 5), or the seven sons of Agni (*te aṅgirasaḥ sūnavaste agneḥ pari jajñire*. The *Asat* principle which preceds the *Sat* or the manifest cosmos is explained as the *Ṛishi Prāṇa*. Alone it does not create and therefore, becomes differentiated as *Sat*. These are also referred to as the seven divine Ṛishis (*Ṛishayaḥ sapta daivyāḥ*, RV. 10. 130. 7; VS. 34. 49; also as *devaputrā ṛishayaḥ*, RV. 10. 62. 4).

Of these *Sākañja Prāṇas* represented as the seven sages, the seventh is said to be *ekaja*, born of One. He is the eldest brother who becomes seven, and the One is the transcendent unborn referred to as *Aja* and *kimapisvidekam* in Mantra 6. It is he who upholds the other six brothers. This seventh brother is also referred to in RV 10. 99. 2 where Griffith explains it as *Septimus* and thinks that it was probably intended as the name of some Rākshasa or demon. The ṚigVeda rather speaks of his intrinsic powers (*Saptathasya māyāḥ*), which Indra with his Marut companions

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[15] *Griffith*—Of the co-born they call the seventh the single-born ; the six twin pairs are called Ṛishis, Children of Gods.

Their good gifts sought of men are ranged in order due, and various in their form move for the Lord who guides.

Wilson—Of those that are born together, sages have called the seventh the single-born ; for six are twins, and are moveable, and born of the gods : their desirable (properties), placed severally in their proper abode, are various (also) in form, and revolve for (the benefit of) that which is stationary.

(*sanīḍebhiḥ*, i.e. occupying the same nest) and with his younger brother Vishṇu conquers or brings under his sway. We think that the meaning of *Saptatha* is the same as in 1. 164. 2 and 10. 99. 2, namely, the eldest of the seven brothers or sons of Agni which according to the triadic pattern is Mind itself, the other six brothers being *Prāṇa* and *Pañcha Bhūtas*, which are under the power of the Mind. *Manas* is spoken of as a mysterious *Yaksha* (*yadapūrvaṁ yaksham antaḥ prajānām*, VS. 34. 2). The *Mahat* is the first category of creation, same as *Buddhi* or *Manas* or the Universal which as a *Yaksha* or *Bhūta* is frightful and therefore has to be brought under control by Indra.

The symbolism of *Sākañja Prāṇas* is explained as the *sapta-śīrshāḥ Prāṇas*, viz. the two eyes, two ears, two nostrils and one tongue. This is alright so far as the concrete forms are concerned, but esoterically, the Mantra speaks of the Heptad principle emanating from the one source.

It is stated in the second line that their respective functions (spheres of Yajña, *ishṭāni*) are arranged (*vihitāni*) according to a divine order in which each one is assigned its own station (*dhāma*) out of the seven stations which belong to Earth, or the principle of Motherhood (*prithivyāḥ sapta dhāmabhiḥ*, RV. 1. 122. 16).

The substratum against which the seven *Prāṇas* function is the principle of rest or the fixed centre, here called *sthātra*, same as *aja*, or *sthāṇu* of later literature. The various forms (*rūpa*) arising out of the modifications of the seven (*vikṛitāni rūpaśaḥ*) derive their movement by the power of the fixed centre. The seven *prāṇic* forces are manifesting themselves as all the forms of the cosmos and they emanate from the One Stable Source, *Sthātra*, which is Unborn (*Ajāyamāna*, cf. *Prajāpatiścharati garbhe antarajāyamāno bahudhā vijāyate.*)





Mantra 16–मानसी कन्या (शतरूपा)

Mind-Born Woman in Each Man
(*The Hundredfold Beauty*)

MANTRA 16

स्त्रियः सतीस्ताँ उ मे पुंस आहुः पश्यदक्षण्वान्न वि चेतदन्धः ।
कविर्यः पुत्रः स ईमा चिकेत यस्ता विजानात् स पितुष्पितासत् ॥

—ऋ० वे० १।१६४।१६॥

They told me these were males, though truly females: he who has eyes sees this, the blind discerns not.

The son who is a Sage comprehends this : he is in wisdom his father's father who knows them rightly.[16]

Griffith says that the 'meaning is obscure' and Wilson observes that 'this is a piece of grammatical mysticism'. Only the first foot of the stanza is significant; the rest three are merely laudatory. The idea is that basically each individual is androgynous, half male and half female, which in later Sanskrit is known as *Nara-nārī-maya-deva* or *Ardhanārīśvara* (Mānasollāsa, vol. 2, p. 64). Originally, it was a Vedic idea to conceive of the world as comprised of Agni and Soma (*Agnīshomāt-makaṁ jagat*) and of each living person as *Agnīshomīya paśu* (ŚB. 5. 3. 3. 1; 2. 4. 4. 11; 9. 5. 1. 23; also see my 'Vedic Lectures', *Soma-Vidyā*, p. 91).

Agni is not exclusively Agni; and so also is Soma, but each Agni carries within its womb the Soma principle and so does Soma. In fact Agni is Heat (*ghraṁsa*) and *Soma* is typified as Cold (*Hima*) and as stated in the Atharva Veda, both of them are two forms of Agni (AV. 13. 1. 46).

The Rishi puts it rather in a flamboyant style : Those who are spoken of as males are females, and *vice versa*, those who are overtly females are covertly males. This is a truth which holds good both on the plane of biology and psychology. If we may be allowed the use of modern terms these are the principles of *animus* and *anima*, the male and the female psychic principles respectively. The harmones and

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[16] *Griffith*—They told me these were males, though truly females : he who hath eye sees this, the blind discerns not.

The son who is a sage hath comprehended : who knows this rightly is his father's father.

Wilson—They have called these, my virtuous females, males : he who has eyes beholds; the blind man seeth not : he who is a sage son understands this, and he who discriminates is the father of the father.

enzymes of the testis and ovaries are relatively present in greater or lesser degree in every biological centre and a very subtle scheme of genetic composition has been devised by Nature through the single life-principle bifurcating as male and female, which although separated on the conscious plane of matter, still retain their 'marriage' or *eka-yonitā* on the plane of *Prāṇa* and *Manas*, i.e. Life and Mind. In the dream state each man creates his woman and so each woman her man.

This is in fact the doctrine of Brahmā creating his mind-born Daughter and falling in love with her to which the Purāṇas refer as *Brahmā-Śatarūpā* or *Brahmā-Sarasvatī* doctrine (Cf. 'Matsya Purāṇa', Ch. 3.31).

It is the same as the splitting of the single primeval egg by its inherent self-potency into two parts as Father and Mother, Male and Female (*strī rūpam ardhama-karot, ardhaṁ purusha rūpavat*, Matsya. 3.31). These two progenitive principles are of composite nature, traceable to a single source. That single source is the Creator himself symbolised as Brahmā who meditated in his heart to discover a creative optimum and then by auto-fission created Sāvitrī, Sarasvatī or Śatarūpā as His Female Energy. Each Female in human, animal, or plant kingdom is an aspect of this Śatarūpā (*śatarūpā cha sā khyātā sāvitrī cha nigadyate*, Matsya, 3. 31).

The Kāma motif is at the root of this pair, each of which is forced to find its opposite centre like the two poles of electric current interacting and pulling each other. This happens because each woman carries within her the male counterpart and each man the female Prāṇic energy, as stated in the Mantra. The single Prāṇic principle which bifurcated for procreation aspires to unite for that very purpose and still retain its dichotomy. Their mutual magnetism is the principle of Kāma, which was created as the first effective power in the creative chain and will remain ever so up to the end of Time (*Kāmastadagre samavartatādhi manaso retaḥ brathamaṁ yadāsīt*, RV. 10. 129. 4). The shaft of love which pierced the heart of Prajāpati when he created Śatarūpā is still the dart that is piercing the hearts of all biological centres (see my 'Matsya Purāṇa—A Study', pp. 47-48).

This fundamental proof of the Ardhanārīśvara or Agni-Soma principle has been accepted and publicised at several levels in India, viz. in the Saṁhitās, Purāṇas, cults, iconography and folk-lore.

It is possible to address each person as both Man and Woman, young girl and young boy (*tvaṁ strī tvaṁ pumān, tvaṁ kumāra uta vā kumārī,* AV. 10. 8. 27).

This doctrine of Ardhanārīśvara is even more emphatically stated in RV. 8. 33. 19 :—

'adhaḥ paśyasva mopari saṁtarāṁ pādakau hara
mā te kaśaplakau driśantstrī hi Brahmā babhūvitha.

Griffith says that the Mantra is not very intelligible, but his translation may be given before we try to explain it :

"Cast down thine eyes and look not up. More closely set thy feet. Let none see what thy garment veils, for thou, a Brahman, hast become a dame."

Here the two pairs of words *adhaḥ* and *upari* have the same meaning as *adhaḥ* and *ūrdhva* in the case of the cosmic *Aśvattha* in the Gītā (15. 1) and of *ūrdhva* and *iha* in the *Purusha Sūkta* (10. 90. 4). In all these places, *ūrdhva* is the centre of *Prāṇic* creation and *adhaḥ* is the outer world of material manifestation. The Mantra says four things :—

(1) Do not look up in the Prāṇic source (*Mānasī srishṭi*), for there the male and the female existed as undifferentiated, but if you look to the level of the *Pañcha Bhūtas*, there you find the two forms have separated.

(2) You bear yourself well on the two feet, implying that the two aspects of *Prāṇa* which exist separately in the male and the female forms have got to become united like the two banks of a river by crossing from one to the other (*saṁtarāṁ hara*). The word *pādaka* or feet is symbolical of *bhūta* or *prithivī*, i.e. the material bodies of the male and the female (*padbhyāṁ bhūmiḥ* RV. 10. 90. 14).

(3) Let none see what thy garment veils. This is said about the female form concealing the male inside her outer garment or the physical body.

(4) Brahmā has assumed a female form in your person. This is said of a male who is openly a man in the physcial body but in reality carries a female in his inner being. Brahmā who was personified as the male creator, himself became a woman as *Śatarūpā*, and that phenomenon is present in all biological manifestations. *Brahmā* is the symbol of fire and the woman is the symbol of *Soma*. It was the single principle of creative Fire known as *Abhīddha Tapas* or *Agraja Tapas*, the primeval Heat which became transformed as Heat and Cold, or *Ṛita* and *Satya* (or Water and Fire).

The second quarter of the Mantra says, 'he who has eyes sees this; the blind does not discern this phenomenon.' Here it is not physical vision or blindness that is intended, but vision in the region of Prāṇa is spoken of as 'sight' and vision in the *Bhūtas* as 'blindness'. This is the same as stated in the Gītā (*yā niśā sarvabhūtānām*, 2. 69) and in the Devī Māhātmya (*divāndhāḥ prāṇinaḥ kechid rātrāvandhās tathāpare*, 1. 35).

The son of a Poet who himself is a Poet (*kaviryaḥ putraḥ*), i.e. whose vision transcends the material world truly knows this secret and in his wisdom is the true son of his father (*pitushpitā*). Here the son is Indra, the principle of Mind (*yo jāta eva prathamo manasvān*); his father is the universal *Parameshṭhī*, whose father is the self-existent *Svayambhū*. In *Parameshṭhī* or the Universal *Ṛita* is the bifurcation of Father and Mother as stated in Mantra 8, but in *Svayambhū* they are one.

MANTRA 17

अवः परेण पर एनावरेण पदा वत्सं बिभ्रती गौरुदस्थात् ।
सा कद्रीची कं स्विदर्धं परागात् क्व स्वित् सूते नहि यूथे अन्तः ॥

—ऋ० वे० १।१६४।१७॥

Beneath the Upper Realm, above this lower One, the Cow has appeared with her Calf tethered to her foot.

Wither-going, to which Half has she departed, where calves she ? Not amid this herd of cattle.[17]

The last Mantra of the Ardhanārīśvara is like a prelude to the doctrine of *para* and *avara*, elaborated in Mantras 17, 18 and 19. This *Para-Avara* doctrine is a significant item of Vedic thought in which the immortal world is the upper one and the mortal creation is the lower one. We have just mentioned the two terms '*ūrdhva*' and '*adhaḥ*'. The immortal heavens and the mortal earth, the centre and the circumference, the *Hṛidaya* and the *Maṇḍala*, the *Yājusha Purusha* and the *Ṛik-Sāman* principles, all these imply through a varied symbolism, the same basic idea, namely, the deeper subtler world of Prāṇa and the outer gross world of Matter. Both are essentially the two aspects of the single Reality which is depicted here in several ways. Beneath the upper realm and above this lower realm, there is an intermediate point called *Nāka Pṛishṭha* or *Divas pṛishṭha*, which in modern term may be explained as the midmost point of consciousness where the conscious and the sub-conscious states pass into each other.

At this juncture where the *Martya* and *Amṛita* are coming into contact appears the Cow with her Calf. The Cow is *Virāj* or Universal Nature and the Calf is Sūrya, the symbol of Brahman in triadic manifestation. As we have explained above, Infinite Nature is the Cow which has created millions and billions of Sūryas standing in one axial alignment which ultimately form part of the one primeval Sūrya

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[17] *Griffith*—Beneath the upper realm, above this lower, bearing her calf at foot the Cow hath risen.

Witherward, to what place hath she departed ? Where calves she ? Not amid this herd of cattle.

Wilson—The cow, holding her calf underneath with her fore-feet, and then above with her hind-feet, has risen up : whither is she gone ; to whom has she turned back when half-way ; where does she bear her young : it is not amidst the herd.

who was the Calf of the Great Mother and who has assumed the many names and forms, that is, become a Calf for each Cow. As soon as the Cow measures out by her foot-steps, the Calf follows and accompanies her as a matter of course. The word *padā* symbolises movement and is spoken of here in her two aspects of Rest and Motion (*padā bibhratī* and *udasthāt*).

The Cow is said to be *kadrīchī*, 'whitherward bound', i.e. roaming in unknown destination which is explained here *kaṁ svid ardha*, same as *katama ardha*, the Unknown Half of the Atharva Veda (AV. 10. 8. 7, 13). The lower half is visible as creation, as the cosmos, —*ardhena viśvaṁ bhuvanaṁ yajāna*—the address of the other half is unknown, for it has left no sign here.

The doctrine of *yūtha* or Herd is mentioned here. The cosmos is the Herd and the transcendent Being is *Ekam*. We know that the Cow *Viśvarūpā* or *Virāj*, is fecundated in the Universal or *Parameshṭhī* by the Sire, the Bull, *Svayambhū* and from their union this Cosmos which is an enclave of all the celestial and earthly powers has come into existence. The Sanskrit terms *yūtha* and *Gaṇa* found in the Ṛig Veda are synonyms and they refer to the entire team of differentiated Devas whose Lord is *Gaṇapati* or *Brahmaṇaspati* or the Universal. This imagery may be understood through Purāṇic symbolism. The *Gaṇadevas* appear in the region of Sūrya which comprises the *Vasus*, *Rudras* and *Ādityas* as symbols of *Trayī Vidyā*. He is the same as Rudra and the triple world of *Pṛithivī*, *Antariksha, Dyauḥ* known as *Rodasī* is the region in which the presiding deity is Rudra and in which the *ardhanārīśvara* form of Rudra is the central fact of Life, i.e. the birth of Prāṇa or the living cell by the union of the two parents or by virtue of the *ardhanārīśvara* principle. Now Rudra is well known as *Gaṇapati*, the Lord of *Gaṇas* or *Pramathas*, which is the same as *yūtha*.

The great Cow roams in the upper regions where she has her pasturage, and after being sired by the Bull the Dame delivers the Calf which is this Sūrya or Cosmos.



MANTRA 18

अवः परेण पितरं यो अस्यानुवेद परं एनावरेण ।
कवीयमानः क इह प्र वोचद् देवं मनः कुतो अधि प्रजातम् ॥

—ऋ० वे० १।१६४।१८॥

Beneath the Upper Realm and above the Lower One, who knows the father of this Calf ?

Who as a Sage putting his thoughts into verses has been able to declare whence hath the godlike Mind originated.[18]

The doctrine of *Para-Avara* is restated here. According to the definition, *Dyauḥ Pitā Pṛithivī Matā*, Heaven is Father and Earth is Mother, Sūrya is Father for purposes of this Mantra. In the Vedic cosmology of seven Lokas, *sapta dhāma*, there are two pairs of Parents, namely, *Svayambhū* and *Parameshṭhī* as the Universal Parents and *Sūrya* and *Pṛithivī* as the individual parents for each manifest cosmos, both of them having an *antariksha* or a midpoint where the two meet and mate for procreation. In Mantra 17 we have the *Parāvara* doctrine stated with reference to the universal parents and in Mantra 18 with reference to the manifested parents. In this region of *Sūrya* and *Pṛithivī* or *Rodasī* i.e. the world of Rudra, Sūrya and *Pṛithivī* represent the *ardhanārīśvara* form. Here *Sūrya* is *Para* and *Pṛithivī* is *Avara*, and the midmost point or the *Nāka Pṛishṭha* where the Father sits and the Mother meets him is *Parāvara*, referred to in the Mantra as 'lower than *Para* and higher than *Avara*'.

In the next half of the Mantra is stated the great mystery of the universe, namely, the creation of a God named as Mind (*devaṁ manaḥ kuto adhi prajātam*). The Mind is a mystery said to be an unknown Yaksha. What is its source ? is the question. The physical body is lifeless, made of the five gross elements of Matter, none of which has the slightest trace of psychical faculty. What

[18] *Griffith*—Who, that the father of this Calf discerneth beneath the upper realm, above the lower, showing himself a sage, may here declare it ? Whence hath the Godlike spirit had its rising ?

Wilson—He who knows the protector of this (world) as the inferior associated with the superior, and the superior associated with the inferior, he is, as it were, a sage ; but who in this world can expound (it) ; whence is the divine mind in its supremacy engendered.



Mantra 18—देवं मनः **God as Mind**

then is the parentage of Mind ? The Ṛishi takes up a challenging tone and says that those who compose the Mantras or as poets leave their thoughts in the verses, let them declare if they know the mystery of the Mind, which is a God and is the greatest of all gods. We do not know if a higher assessment, a more lofty enunciation of the powers of Mind is found elsewhere. The conscious, sub-conscious, unconscious and collective unconcious, and whatever else modern teachers of the mysteries of Mind may formulate, this great secret remains still the dark region of our knowledge, and he verily may be said to be endowed with vision who can see in this long darkness. Each one of us here is as it were a blind Dīrghatamas. Who has known ? Who has said ? This kind of style is used in the Ṛig Veda where higher metaphyscial points of the secret doctrine are on the forum.

The principle of Mind is the same as Manu who was the Archetypal Prajāpati and who is identified with Sūrya as his son, namely, Vaivasvata Manu, the Progenitor of human race, whose thousand rays have descended into each individual centre as the individual Mind. The cosmic Mind is *Vijñāna* and the individual *Prajñāna*; the former is thousand-syllabled, *Sahasrākshara*, the latter as of measured syllables; the former is of a thousand spokes, *sahasrāra*, and the latter of a single spoke or three spokes (*tryara*), the former is a lotus of thousand petals, *sahasrāra dala-padma* and the latter but a single petal of that cosmic Lotus. The former is thousand rayed, *sahasrāṁśu*, and the latter is a single ray of that resplendent Sūrya, which is Brahman itself. These are all two aspects of one and the same Manu Prajāpati who is graphically described as covering these various aspects of his power as Agni, Indra, Prāṇa and eternal Brahman (*Etameke vadantyagniṁ manu-manye prajāpatim, Indrameke pare prāṇam, apare Brahma Śāśvatam*, Manu Sm. 12. 123).

Such then are the depths of psychology awaiting to be gauged in order to understand a whit of Mind's mystery which the Ṛishi here identifies with Divinity.

Indeed, all the Vedic gods would find their source and culmination in the one principle of Mind which is sometimes symbolised as Āditya or Sun, spoken of as the personification of All-Gods, *Sarva-devatva*.



MANTRA 19

ये अर्वाञ्चस्ताँ उ परांच आहुर्ये परांञ्चस्ता उं अर्वाचं आहुः ।
इन्द्रंश्च या चक्रथुः सोम तार्नि धुरा न युक्ता रजसो वहन्ति ॥

—ऋ० वे० १।१६४।१९॥

Those that are coming below, they say are going up ; those that are going up, they call coming below.

O Indra and Soma, what you have made, Steads bear with the power of Rajas, yoked, as it were, to the Car-pole.[19]

The same doctrine of *Para* and *Avara* is continued. The *parārdha* is becoming *avarārdha* and the *avarārdha* is returning to merge into *parārdha*. This is the cycle of Time and of Creation. The immortal heaven is creating the mortal earth and the mortal earth returning to its immortal source. The word *arvāñchaḥ*, 'coming near' refers to the downward movement of the wheel (*nigrābha*), and *parāñchaḥ*, 'going up', to the upward movement (*udgrābha*). The implication is that the ascending node carries within itself the potentiality of descent and similarly the descending point must rise up again. This is the Law which makes up the rhythmic movement of the Cosmic Wheel, Time Wheel, and the individual Life-cycle possible. It is like an inverted Tree having its root above and its branches below. The *arvāk* or the lower branch of the tree is known as *sat śākhā* and *parāk* as the *asat śākhā*. Here this symbolism applies to Matter and Prāṇa respectively. Manifestation in Matter is the lower order but which people generally regard as the reality, whereas Prāṇic manifestation which is of a higher order is regarded as of lesser importance. This is the topsyturvy view of Life and creation held by the people.

The Atharva explicitly gives the meaning of *Para* and *Avara* :—

Asachchhākhāṁ pratishṭhantīṁ paramamiva janā viduḥ
Uto sanmanyante' vare ye te Śākhāmupāsate (AV. 10. 7. 21)

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[19] *Griffith*—Those that come hitherward they call departing, those that depart they call directed hither. And what so ye have made, Indra and Soma, steeds bear as it were yoked to the region's car-pole.

Wilson—Those which (the sages) have termed descending, they have also termed ascending ; and those they have termed ascending, they have also called descending ; and those (orbits) which thou, Soma and Indra, hast made, bear along the worlds like (oxen) yoked to a wain.

(Griffith): "Men count, as it were, a thing supreme non-entity's conspicuous branch; and lower men who serve thy branch regard it as an entity."

Here the two branches are named as *asat* and *sat*, where *asat*, as explained in the Śatapatha, refers to Prāṇa : '*Asat* existed in the beginning. They asked what was that *Asat* ? (They replied) the Ṛishis, verily, in the beginning were the *Asat*. They asked : who were those Ṛishis ? (The reply is) that the Prāṇas were the Ṛishis. Because the Prāṇas desiring to create All This (the Cosmos), exerted and performed *tapas*, therefore they were known as the Ṛishis' (ŚB. 6. 1. 1. 1).

The other branch is named the *Sat śākhā*, which is, what the *avaras* say about it, implying that it is the lower branch.

This doctrine of *Asat* and *Sat* is elaborated in the Ṛig Veda (RV. 10. 72. 2-3, *devānāṁ pūrvye yuge' sataḥ sadajāyata*). That is, the existent creation emanates from the non-existent and that was the ordinance in the primeval divine ages.

Griffith's rendering is off the mark and so also of others cited by him in his footnote : "The stanza may be rendered, in accordance with Professor Goldstücker's interpretation (O. S. Texts, V. p. 384) : Some count as it were supreme this branch existing, non-reality; But some, inferior, deeming it reality, adore thy branch : that is, in Prof. Goldstücker's words : 'Some people think that the *existing* branch (i. e. the existing Vedas—compare verse 20), which is not *the* reality (*asat*), is, as it were (*iva*), the highest (*paramam*) Veda; on the other hand, those (people) inferior (to the former), who believe that it is the reality (*sat*), worship thy branch (i. e. those later Vedas).' Professor Ludwig suggests the reading *apare*, others, instead of *avare*, inferior; in which case the meaning would be that different men entertain different opinions regarding the relative priority of the existent and the non-existent. My version in the text follows Muir's rendering which was partly suggested by Prof. Aufrecht."

The *asat* and *sat* correspond to *para* and *avara*, to *prāṇa* and *bhūta*, to *ūrdhva* and *adhaḥ* respectively.

The second part of the stanza says that Indra and Soma have created these relative divisions of the upper half and the lower half. Indra or Sūrya is the symbol of the Father-principle and of heaven and Soma of the Mother-principle or the earth or Matter. They pull together like two oxen drawing a single wagon.

Their power or the force exercised is the *rajas* which is twofold, namely, *kṛishṇa rajas* and *śukla rajas*, moving together like the two wheels (*vivartete ahanī chakriyeva*, RV. 1. 85. 1; *Ā kṛishṇena rajasā vartamānaḥ*, 1. 35. 2; *ahaścha kṛishṇam ahararunaṁ cha vivartete rajasī*, RV. 6. 9. 1.; also *kṛishṇa* and *ruśad archiḥ*, RV. 4. 7. 9; also

the two *rajas* forces one turning east and the other opposed to it, RV. 10. 37. 3; also, 1. 115. 5; 8. 43. 6).

The two forms of *rajas* symbolise the twin principles of rest and motion, the black or dark signifying stasis (*sthiti*) and the white stands for movement (*gati*). They produce the mutual tension by which alone the pulls towards the centre and away from the centre are exercised. Without this duality the chariot of the Sun-god would not be able to move. In Ṛig Veda (3. 40. 8-9) there is again a reference to the two extremes, namely, far and near, *parāvata* and *arvāvata*, between which Indra functions.

There are many other forms of this basic duality mentioned in the Vedas and in later literature, to which Coomaraswamy has drawn pointed attention :

"The notion of a single principle that faces in two opposite directions, that, namely of the Janus type in iconography, is thus extensively developed in the Ṛig Veda, e. g. X. 5. 6, where Agni is stationed 'at the parting of the ways' (*pathāṁ visarge*), that is of course on the threshold of the gate of the worlds (*lokadvāra*). Amongst the consequences of such an opposite orientation of light and dark worlds we may note, for example, "Those that come hitherward (*arvāñchaḥ*), *they* call departing" (*parāchaḥ*), RV. 1. 164. 19, and "What incantation the Angels pronounce forward (*avastāt*) that Titans pronounce backward (*parastāt*), JB. I. 125, analogous to which is the pulling of the *Devas* and *Asuras* in opposite direction at the Churning of the Ocean, and it should not be overlooked that such an opposition of the opposing principles is indispensable for creation. From the Karmakāṇḍa and the Kshatriya point of view, the auspicious motion is forwards in a rectilinear sense; but from the Jñānakāṇḍa and Brāhmaṇa point of view the auspicious direction is, not indeed backwards, but in a sense to be explained—nevertheless an opposite one. Inevitably opposite, for when the forward steps have been taken, they must in some sense be retraced, whatever have been affirmed must also be denied, whatever has been stolen must be restored, if ever the wayfarer is to reach That One "who never really rises nor sets." For the extraverted consciousness, accordingly, an introversion is required, and this is what is alluded to in all such expressions as *pratyakchetana*, "reverse thinking", defined as follows by Maṇiprabha on YS. 1. 29, "Thought is said to be reversed (*pratyañch*) when it turns (*añchati*) against the current" (*pratīpam*), which as Bhoja adds, "is effected in the case of Yogīs." The "upstream" imagery, which recurs also in Pali Buddhist *uddhamsota*, "upstreamer," is first to my knowledge explicitly employed in TS. VII. 5. 7. 4, *pratikūla iva vā itaḥ suvargo lokaḥ* "Heaven world is counter-current as it were from here," cf. JB. III. 150 and PB. XXV. 10. 12-18. As a further example of "reverse thinking" may be

cited BG. II. 69, "That which is night of all the beings is for the truly poor man (*saṁnyāsin*) the time of wakening; when other beings are awake, then it is night for the seeing Muni," cf. "the Light that is in you is darkness," and the discussion of *sushupāṇam* in section 6 above, recalling that *sushupta*, "Deep Sleep", is contrasted in the Jñānakāṇḍa with the "Waking State" of consciousness, as superior to inferior.

"It is important to observe, at the same time, that the 'opposite direction' is not a backward one, but onward (TS. VII. 2. 1. 3. *prāṅ iva hi suvargaḥ*). The Wayfarer, whether he continues on the *devayāna* or lingers on the *pitṛiyāna*, is always thought of as following up the circle of the Year, he does not turn about leftwise to go backwards (incantations are repeated backwards and widdershins movements made only in *black* magic); any such backsliding (*avasarpaṇa* as contrasted with *atisarpaṇa*) would involve, not the desired integration (*saṁskaraṇa*) but a disintegration (*vikaraṇa, Visraṁsana*). It should be added that the circumambulation of the Year which represents the individual's pilgrimage envisaged as if taking place on a given level of reference, a single "word" (*loka*), can be regarded from another point of view as a movement outwards (*pravṛitti*) from the centre towards the circumference and conversely (*nivṛitti*) this motion following first a downward and later an upward course on a continuous spiral centred about the axis of the universe; the points at which the spiral cuts successive levels of reference, and in particular those planes that represent the 'seven worlds', representing the different stations that are occupied by this individual principle in the course of its transmigration (*paribhramaṇa*), and modification ((*vṛitti*). The Wayfarer in either case, when half the circle has been run, or when the spiral is reversed, moves now in a new and opposite direction, "counter-current". The turning point, so critical in the history of the individual, is referred to in religion as a repentence, or even more significantly as a conversion, while in metaphysics, this is the "reversion of the spiritual power", (*brahmaṇa āvartaḥ*) as cited above, of which, dis-passion (*vairāgya*) is the sign. (A. K. Coomaraswamy, "Angel and Titan", An Essay in Vedic Ontology, in JAOS, Vol. 55, No. 4, pp. 402-4).



10

MANTRA 20

द्वा सुपर्णा सयुजा सखाया समानं वृक्षं परि षस्वजाते ।
तयोरन्यः पिप्पलं स्वाद्वत्त्यनश्नन्नन्यो अभि चाकशीति ॥

—ऋ० वे० १।१६४।२०॥

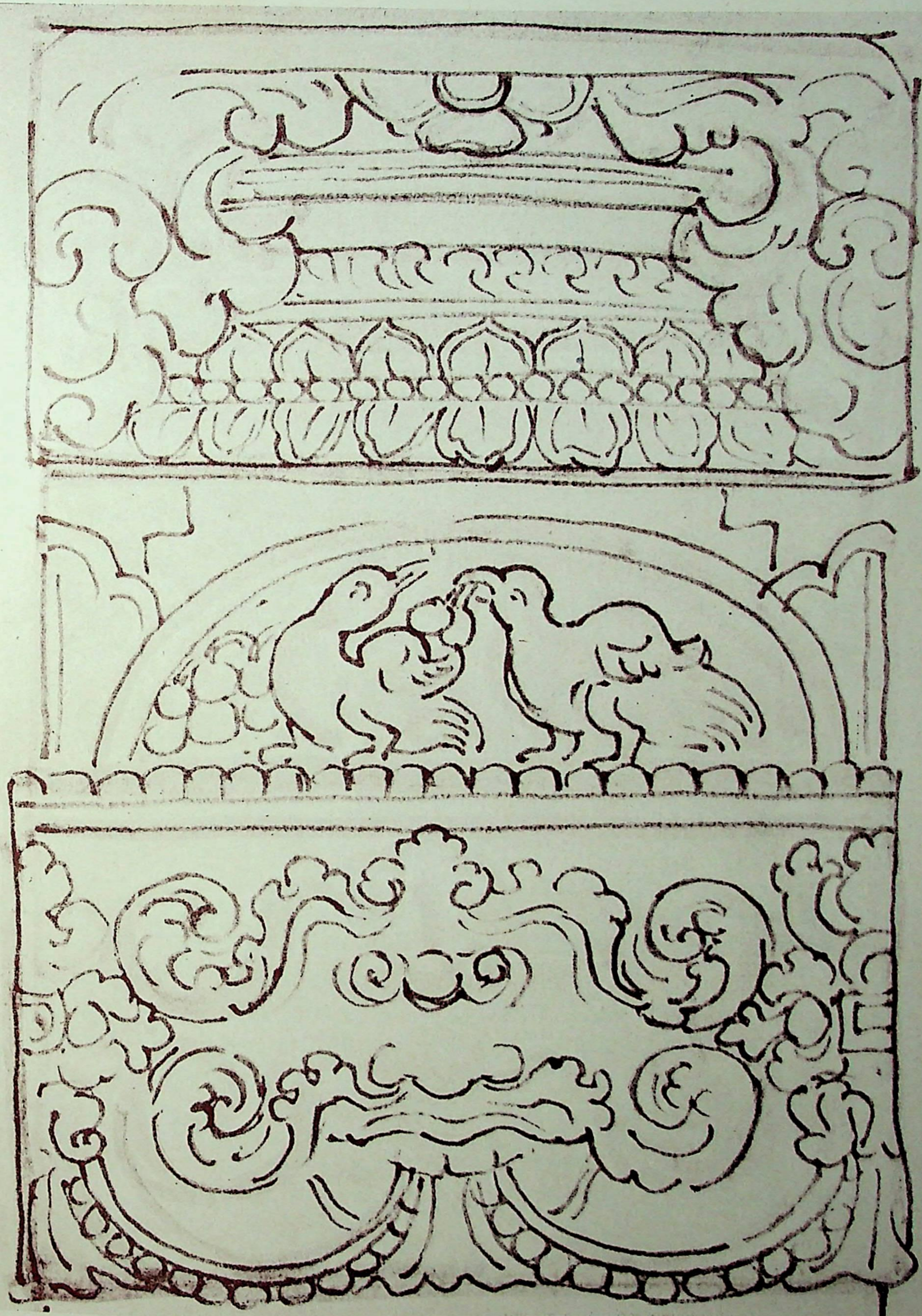
Two Birds, fast bound companions, clasp close the self-same tree.
Of these two, the one eats sweet fruit ; the other looks on without eating.[20]

This is the well known doctrine of *Suparṇa-Vidyā* of which the earliest reference is found in the Ṛig Veda itself and which later on becomes a plank in the philosophy of the Upanishads and both in Sāṁkhya and Vedānta. As observed by Sāyaṇa and approved by Griffith the two birds are the vital spirit (*jīvātmā*) and the Supreme Spirit (*Paramātmā*). They are associated in bonds of eternal friendship (*sayujā sakhāyā*). According to Veda, Friendship extends to Seven Steps (*saptapadaḥ sakhā,* AV. 5. 11. 9, 10) and these seven steps are the triple manifestations of Life, Mind and Matter, the last, consisting of *pañcha bhūtas*, makes up the seven. These, it may be remembered, are the seven steps taken by the husband and the wife together, while solemnising their marriage, and these are also the Seven Steps taken by the Buddha after his birth. The Tree is the Cosmos or the Tree of Existence, called *Aśvattha*, in later Indian mythology. Sāyaṇa quotes the Mantra given in Muṇḍaka, 3. 1. 2, SU. 4. 7. The vital spirit and the Supreme Spirit dwell in the same body; the former enjoys the fruit, rewards of action, while the latter is merely a passive spectator. Ātmānanda agrees with the interpretation. According to another view already known to the JUB (3. 35. 2) the Life-principle or Prāṇa is symbolised as the Bird (*pataṅga*) which is the same as *suparṇa*. The two wings are the rhythmic principles of contraction and expansion which is the truth of all rhythmic motions and so is life governed by this basic duality (*prāṇo vai samañchana-prasā-*

[20] *Griffith*—Two birds with fair wings, knit with bonds of friendship, in the same sheltering tree have found a refuge.

One of twain eats the sweet Fig Tree's fruitage ; and the other eating not regardeth only.

Wilson—Two birds associated together, and mutual friends, take refuge in the same tree : one of them eats the sweet fig ; the other abstaining from food, merely looks on.



Mantra 20—द्वा सुपर्णा **Two Birds**

raṇam, ŚB. 8. 1. 4. 10). There is an imagery that the earth and the heaven have been produced by the flapping of the two wings of *Prajāpati* (RV. 10. 81. 3).

In the Ṛig Veda we find the conception of one *suparṇa* (*ekaḥ suparṇaḥ sa samudra āviveśa*, RV. 10. 114. 4) where Purusha is defined as the Ocean (*Purusho vai samudraḥ*, JUB. 3. 35. 5). It is emphatically stated that the sages speak of one *suparṇa* as many (*suparṇaṁ viprāḥ kavayo vachobhirekaṁ santaṁ bahudhā kalpayanti*, RV. 10. 114. 5). Then there is the conception of two *suparṇas* perched on the same Tree as we have here, and also in RV. 10. 114. 3 where it is said that the two birds have their station with the youthful maidens of four-braided locks (*chatushkaparda yuvatīḥ*) who dresses herself in rich garments and falls in love with the two birds. The bride of four locks, of course, being the *Prakṛiti*. (For fuller explanation, see my paper, 'Symbolism of the Two Boilers', in 'Indological Journal' of the Viśveśvarānanda Institute, Vol. I. pt. 1).

The Atharva refers to Three Birds (AV. 18. 4. 4, *trayaḥ suparṇāḥ*) which imports the trinitarian principle exemplified as Agni, Vāyu, Āditya or *Ekata*, *Dvita*, *Trita*, etc. (See also my book : "Sparks From The Vedic Fire", 1962, *Suparṇa*, pp. 52-60).

The word *Suparṇa* has several connotations. Griffith gives a suggestive note : "*suparṇā* (dual) has been explained by different scholars as two species of souls; day and night, Sun and Moon, (plural) as rays of light; stars; metres, spirits of the dead; priests; and the Tree on which they rest as the body; the orb or region of the Sun; the sacrificial post; the world; and the mythical World-Tree.

"A generally satisfactory explanation is scarcely to be hoped for."

Literally, *suparṇa* is one who has a strong wing. A wing is not single, but a pair to aid in flight. This duality is the basic idea in designating *Prajāpati* as *Suparṇa* (*Prajāpatir vai suparṇo garutmān*, ŚB. 6. 7. 2. 6). The one divinity who is the same as *Agni*, *Indra*, *Mitra* and *Varuṇa*, *Yama*, *Mātariśvan* is also called *Garutmān-Suparṇa*.

Parṇa, "Wing", signifies rhythmic motion, the same as *pada* or *chakra*. Light is the result of the rhythmic movement of the wings of a bird, and furnishes the most appropriate analogy to the cosmic movement, released by Prajāpati in his creation and therefore, the Creator is termed *Surparṇa* (*prajāpatir vai suparṇo garutmān*, ŚB. 6. 7. 2. 6). The dynamic movement inherent in the cosmos is due to the flapping of wings by the Time-Bird or *Saṁvatsara* which is also called the *Mahā Suparṇa* : "but, indeed, that year is a great eagle : the six months which they perform prior to the *Vishuvat* are the one wing, and those which they perform subsequent thereto are the other (ŚB. 12. 2. 3. 7, *Esha mahā suparṇa eva yat saṁvatsaraḥ*).

Sūrya, the Sun god, is also spoken of as *Suparṇa* : he, strong of wing, hath lighted up the regions, deep quivering *asura,* the gentle Leaders (*vi suparṇo antarikshāṇyakhyad gabhīravepā asuraḥ sunīthaḥ*, RV. 1. 35. 7). The conception of *Suparṇa* is in the Purāṇas transferred to Garuḍa, the vehicle of Vishṇu (*chhandomayena garuḍena samuhyamānaśchakrāyudho' bhyagamadāśu yato gajendraḥ*, *Bhāgavata*, 8. 3. 31).

Whatever be the form of a symbol the truth is that the cosmic rhythm is rooted in the duality of the two fluttering wings of the Great Bird manifesting as Āditya and Agni, as the immortal and the mortal, as the Jīvātman and the Paramātman or as the individual Soul and the transcendent Brahman. It is also stated as an accepted truth that the Two Birds are inseparable companions roosting on the same Tree.





Mantra–21 विश्वस्य भुवनस्य गोपा–सुपर्णं विदथ

World Guardian in the Assembly of Birds

MANRRA 21

यत्रा सुपर्णा अमृतस्य भागमनिमेषं विदथाभिस्वरन्ति ।
इनो विश्वस्य भुवनस्य गोपाः स मा धीरः पाकमत्रा विवेश ॥

—ऋ० वे० १।१६४।२१॥

Where those fair-winged Birds ceaselessly hymn in their assembles the portion of immortal life.

There is the mighty Guardian of the Universe ; He, the Wise, has entered into me, the Simple.[21]

The imagery in this Mantra is taken from the communal chirping of the birds roosting on a tree both evening and morning. It is compared to a synod of wise men (*vidatha*), uttering their thoughts or hymns of praise. The pronoun *yatrā* refers to the Tree mentioned in Mantra 20. The Cosmic Tree represents the totality of creation. Whatever be the number of the countless universes, they are all signified by the imagery of the Tree Aśvattha, of which each leaf is the symbol of universe. Each world or each Sūrya as the centre of that world or each individual soul as the centre of its own world is a type of *Suparṇa*, and an assemblage of them constitutes the totality of creation. These *Suparṇas* differentiated in manifestation pray for their share of immortality (*amṛitasya bhāgam abhisvaranti*). Each one of them is ceaselessly speaking with the tongue of silence which is deeper than words, invoking the mystery which is termed as *Amṛitam*, the transcendent divine and immortal soul of all manifest creation. The poet thinks of the cosmic birds sitting in an assembly as it were and continuing their chorus songs eternally. In Mantra 47 these Golden Birds (*Harayaḥ Suparṇāḥ*) are mentioned as emerging from their dark nests (*kṛishṇaṁ niyānam*) and slashing into heavenly space. In Mantra 52

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[21] *Griffith*—Where those fine birds hymn ceaselessly their portion of life eternal, and the scared synods,

There is the Universe's mighty keeper, who wise, hath entered into me the simple.

Wilson—Where the smooth-gliding (rays), cognizant (of their duty), distill the perpetual portion of ambrosial (water) ; there has the Lord and steadfast protector of all beings cognised me, (though) immature (in wisdom).

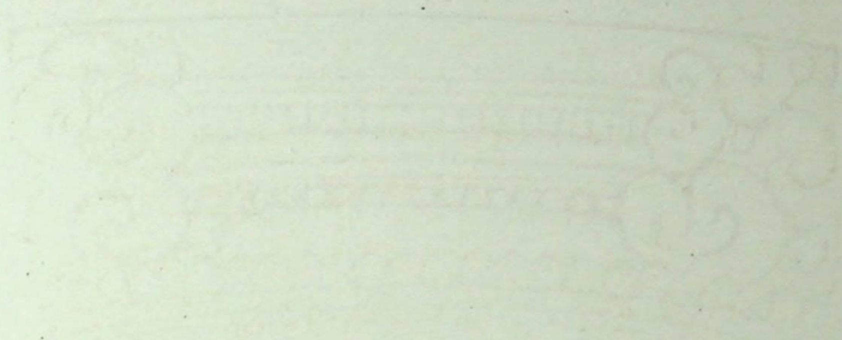
there is mention of a majestic celestial bird said to be the Son of Waters (*apāṁ garbham*), corresponding to the Robes of Waters worn by the *Suparṇas* flitting in space (*apo vasānāḥ*) in Mantra 47. The idea in both places is the Golden *Suparṇas* which are so many universes or solar systems or stars and constellations spoken of as *Bhuvana*, have their source in the primeval ocean of Varuṇa from where they fly on their golden wings into space and time manifestations.

It should be remembered that each of these birds is a mortal creature and therefore, prays for its portion of immortal essence, where *amṛitam* is the symbol of the divine power, which is beyond space and time.

The third quarter of the Mantra refers to the Lord and Guardian of all the worlds who is transcendent Brahman. It is he who enters as the principle of Consciousness all the centres of Matter. The Ṛishi thinks of that great principle of Mind, *sa Dhīraḥ*, coming to inspire his immature understanding, *pākam āviveśa*.

In Vedic language the two words, *pāka* and *dhīra*, are of opposite meaning, *pāka* referring to the Mind choked by Matter and *Dhīra* to the Mind soaked in Intelligence (*vijñāna*), that is, thoughts of the Supreme Spirit. The man engrossed in matter acquires a density of understanding in which intuitional shaft of divine light will not enter.







Mantra 22 —त्रयः सुपर्णाः Three Birds

MANTRA 22

यस्मिन् वृक्षे मध्वदः सुपर्णा निविशन्ते सुवते चाधि विश्वे ।
तस्येदाहुः पिप्पलं स्वाद्वग्रे तन्नोन्नशद्यः पितरं न वेद ॥

—ऋ० वे० १।१६४।२२॥

The tree whereon the fair-winged Birds, sucking honey, roost and procreate,
Upon its top they say the Fig is luscious : none obtains it, who knows not the Father.[22]

Again we have a reference to the Cosmic Tree of rich foliage, *supalāśa vriksha*, on which the honey-eating Birds are roosting and breeding or perpetuating their race in the manner determined by Nature for each one of them.

The most significant word here is *madhvada*, honey-sucking; of course, there are honey-sucking birds in Nature which have inspired this imagery. Each one of the individuals (*jīvas*) is a honey-sucking bird, where honey symbolises Prāṇa (*prāṇo vai madhu*, ŚB. 14. 1. 3. 30; also VS. 37. 13). The solar rays are conceived of as the honey-making bees, *madhukṛitaḥ*, scattering *prāṇā* in all centres (cf. *prāṇaḥ prajānām udayatyesha Sūryaḥ*) and the Sun itself is the beehive where cosmic honey is stored. The Ṛishis explain *madhu* as the universal Prāṇa (*sarvaṁ vā idaṁ madhu yadidaṁ kiñcha*, ŚB. 3. 7. 1. 11; 14. 1. 3. 13). In Vedic symbolism, *dadhi* (curds) is taken as the symbol of Matter (*dadhi haivāsya lokasya rūpam*, ŚB. 7. 5. 1. 3). Butter (*ghṛita*) of *antariksha* or mid-air (*ghṛitam antarikshasya rūpaṁ*, ŚB. 7. 5. 1. 3) and honey of the immortal world of the Gods or heaven, symbolising Mind (*madhv amushya svargasya lokasya rūpam*, ŚB. 7. 5. 1. 3).

Madhu is the great mead or pervasive sweetness, *parama rasa* (*paramaraso yan madhu*, ŚB. 11. 5. 4. 18) and there is no more delicious drink or food than Prāṇa

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[22] *Griffith*—The Tree whereon the fine Birds eat the sweetness, where they all rest and procreate their offspring,—

Upon its top they say the Fig is luscious : none gaineth it who knoweth not the Father.

Wilson—In the tree into which the smooth-gliding (rays), feeders on the sweet (produce), enter, and again bring forth (light) over all : they have called the fruit sweet, but he partakes not of it who knows not the protector (of the universe).

itself. Thus each individual is truly a *madhvada suparṇa*, a veritable Honey-sucker. There are four types of honey-suckers which live on honey bees and honey and therefore also known as the Bee-eaters. They are :

(1) Blue-bearded species, which is the largest of all, entirely a forest bird, 14″ long, which lives mainly on insects and honey and utters harsh double note (Vedic name : *Jaritṛi*, RV. 10. 142. 1-2).

(2) The blue-tailed species, being the next larger one (Vedic Sanskrit : *Sari sṛikva*, RV. 10. 142. 3-4).

(3) Common Indian Bee-eater which prefers a low bush for a perch (Vedic Sanskrit: *Stambha Mitra*, RV. 10. 142. 5-6).

(4) Chestnut-headed species which roost in flocks and make a thrilling chorus, most musical and trill (Vedic Sanskrit : *Droṇa*, RV. 10. 142. 7-8).

These are the four Bee-eaters called *Śārṅga Pakshī*, as the Ṛishis of 10. 12. According to the Ādi Parva of the Mbh., Ṛishi Mandapāla who was a bachelor-sage, is born as a *Śārṅga Bird*, a Honey-sucker, which is the same as *Madhvada*, and his wife *Sārṅgakā* gives birth to four sons, who are the Seers of Sūkta 10. 142 (Mahābhārata, Ādi Parva, ch. 223). The name Mandapāla signifies his being a guar dian of Manda or Soma. Soma or the Cosmic principle of Life and Vitality is said to be of four kinds, viz *Aṁśu*, (plant shoots) symbolising Matter; *Graha*, the drinking cup symbolising the organs of sense (*Indriyas* or *Prāṇas*) and *Rājā*, (or King Soma), which symbolises the principle of Mind as an unknown *Yaksha* (*apūrva Yaksha*) in the centre of all beings (VS. 34. 4) and the last of all, *Vāja*, signifying the universal Mind or *Vijñāna*. These four kinds of Honey-eating Birds represent the basic fourfold pattern of the creation and are the Honey-eating Suparṇas which roost on the Cosmic Tree and make an endless shrilling chorus, and all of them love to feed on Honey, and therefore entitled to the epithet, *Madhvadaḥ Suparṇāḥ*.

In the third part of the stanza there is a reference to the sweet fruit on the top of the Tree under which the Birds rest. It is certainly the Fruit of Life which is delicious and is desired by all. He who does not know his Father cannot taste of this fruit. The meaning is clear. The Father being the presiding Prajāpati, or the Creator, the immortal source of the mortal cosmos and men. Unless a Man is attuned to the Immortal Spirit of the Creator, he remains deprived of the real zest of Life, its ambrosial quintessence or the bliss, by which all creatures live and are sustained.

MANTRA 23

यद् गायत्रे अधि गायत्रमाहितं त्रैष्टुभाद्वा त्रैष्टुभं निरतक्षत।
यद्वा जगज्जगत्याहितं पदं य इत्तद्विदुस्ते अमृतत्वमानशुः॥

—ऋ० वे० १।१६४।२३॥

On the immortal *Gāyatra* (Prāṇa of Gāyatrī rhythm) is supported the manifest mortal Gāyatra.

From the immortal *Traishṭubha* was fashioned forth the mortal *Traishṭubha*. Mortal *Jagatī* is based on the immortal *Jagatī*. They who know this enjoy immortal life.[23]

After the description of the *Suparṇas* in the above three Mantras, the poet thinks of the *Tri-Suparṇa* doctrine in which the metres Gāyatrī, Trishṭup and Jagatī are the Three Birds, whose flight to heaven becomes successful in bringing the *amṛitam*. Mantras 23, 24, 25 present an exposition of *Tri-Suparṇa Vidyā*. Gāyatrī, Trishṭup and Jagatī are the three principles of Prāṇic pulsation; also symbolising the Prāṇic forces of the three Lokas, three Devas, three Agins and all the triadic patterns in the cosmos; they are named as Gāyatra, Traishṭubha and Jāgata, after the names of the three metres. It should not be difficult to understand the intention of the Ṛishi as looking on Life in terms of three stages of boyhood, youth and old age, which are stated to be like the three fuel-sticks which Mother Nature has implanted in each living centre and the energies of which unfold themselves one after another in their respective seasons. These may be compared to three fuses or a triplefuse with combustible material which burns at its time in pre-determined order and then is put out. This is how Life has been planned and becomes manifest in each body on the level of plants, animals and men.

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[23] *Griffith*—How on the Gāyatrī, the Gāyatrī; was based, how from the Trishṭub they fashioned the Trishṭub forth;

How on the Jagatī was based the Jagatī; they who know this have won themselves immortal life.

Wilson—They who know the station of Agni upon the earth ; the station of Vāyu that was fabricated from the firmament ; and that station of the Sun which is placed in heaven, obtain immortality.

Pursuing a well-defined scheme of symbolism, the relation of the three metres and the three Lokas and the triple principle of Life may be clearly stated as follows :

(1) Pṛithivī is Gāyatra Loka and the sphere of Gāyatra Prāṇa;
(2) Antariksha is Traishṭubha Loka and is the sphere of Traishṭubha Prāṇa;
(3) Dyauḥ is Jagat-Pāda (Jāgata pāda) and is the sphere of Jāgata Prāṇa.

Now these three prāṇic forces are the same as Agni, Vāyu and Āditya or Vāk, Prāṇa and Manas or Mind, Life and Matter :—

(1) Gāyatrī Metre	Gāyatra Prāṇa	Agni Devatā	Vāk-Matter
(2) Trishṭup metre	Traishṭubha Prāṇa	Vāyu Devatā	Prāṇa-Life
(3) Jagatī Metre	Jāgata Prāṇa	Āditya Devatā	Manas-Mind

Each one of these governing principles or *Devaṭā* is also called *Nara*, a Hero in its own sphere, and the three together are known as *Vāiśva·Nara*, which coming together create the *Vaiśvānara* Fire or bring the *Vaiśvānara* Fire from heaven to the earth, the *Vaiśvānara* being spoken of as the glory of the three worlds and the King of all men (*Bhuvanam abhiśrīḥ*, RV. 1.98.1).

The object of the Ṛishi is to point out that the three Prāṇic forces on the level of material manifestation have their sources in the immortal *Amṛitam* and they are being constantly vitalised by the surplus energy from that source. That is the burden of these stanzas, and with that a number of other important statements have been made which throw light on the Vedic conception of the *Chhando Vidyā*, the doctrine of the Metres which depend for their differentiation on the *Akshara Vidyā.*

In the phrase that the Gāyatra was placed in the Gāyatra, the first Gāyatra refers to Matter or the manifest world and the second to prāṇa which as the unmanifest brings the manifest into existence and then enters it by the doctrine of *Anupraveśa*, *tat srishṭvā tadevānuprāviśat*, or the archetypal has entered the subsequent type, *prathamachchhad avarā āviveśa*, RV. 10.81.1.

Similarly the *Traishṭubha Prāṇa* fashions (*niratakshata*) the Traishṭubha Loka and then enters it. When adolescence comes, a different kind of physiological set-up begins to function and new harmones and secretions create wonderful changes in the body which prepare all the tissues and organs for the procreative efflorescence which is the singular privilege of youth.

Similarly Jagatī placed her foot in the Jāgata prāṇa (*jagat pāda*) which entered the Loka created by it. Those who know this inter-relationship between the Prāṇas and the Lokas, between the triple Life-principles and their material containers,

i.e. between *Amṛita* and *Martya*, or between *Deva* and *Bhūta*, gain competence to concentrate on *Amṛitaṁ*. (*Ya it tadvidus te amṛitatvamānaśuḥ*—He who knows This becomes This). Knowledge implies conversion of *Bhūta* and lifting it to the realm of *Deva*.

The Kaushītaki Brāhmaṇa explains this symbolism in explicit terms : " *Gāyatre asmin loke gāyatro'yamagniradhyūḍhaḥ, traishṭubhe' ntariskha loke traishṭubho vāyuradhyūḍhaḥ, Jāgate amushmin loke jāgato' sāvādityo' dhyūḍhaḥ,* KB. 14.3.



MANTRA 24

गायत्रेण प्रतिं मिमीते अर्कमर्केण साम त्रैष्टुभेन वाकम् ।
वाकेन वाकं द्विपदा चतुष्पदाऽक्षरेण मिमते सप्त वाणीः ।।

—ऋ० वे० १।१६४।२४।।

With *Gāyatra* he measures out the *Arka* ; with *Arka*, *Sāma* ; and with *Traishṭubha Vāka*. With the power of *Vāka* he measures out *Vāka*, as of two feet and four feet. With the *Akshara* they measure out the Seven Metres.[24]

The present Mantra expatiates on the *pratimimāna* doctrine, also known as *mimāna* or *māyā*, from the root *mā* to measure. The cosmos is essentially a measuring out according to numberless geometries applicable to each category of relation. When Prajāpati decided upon creation, he was faced with two problems, namely, what should be the model and what should be the measure or geometry of the cosmos. The Ṛig Veda formulates the problem :—*kāsīt pramā pratimā* (10.130.3). He found the solution in his own self, he himself became the modal and himself the measure of the cosmos, because the later he conceived as his own image (*ātmanaḥ pratimām asṛikshi*, ŚB. 11.1.13). Where else could the Archetypal Architect go in search of his techtonic model and plan, since as self-existent He was alone. This doctrine was elaborated in many ways in terms of *Yajña*, *Loka*, *Deva*, *Veda*, *Vāk*, *Gauḥ*, and all other triadic and tetradic patterns of which the cosmos is composed as a mirror of the nature of Prajāpati himself. This leads us further to the symbolism of numbers which applies equally to the manifest world and its unmanifest source.

In this Mantra five kinds of measuring principles are invoked, viz. (1) measuring out *arka* with *Gāyatra*;

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[24] *Griffith*—With Gāyatrī he measures out the praise-song, Sāma with praise song, triplet with Trishṭub,

The triplet with the two or four-foot measure, and with the syllable they form seven metres.

Wilson—He constructs the prayer with the Gāyatrī metre ; with the prayer (he constructs) the Sāma, and with the Trishṭub metre the couplet (or triplet): with the couplet (or triplet) he constructs the hymn with (verses of) two or four distichs ; and with the syllable they construct the seven metres.

(2) measuring out Sāma or *Tejomaṇḍala* with *Arka*;

(3) measuring out *Vāka* with *Traishṭubha*;

(4) measuring out *Vāka* with *Vāka* with two-fold geometry of two Feet (*dvipadā*) and four Feet (*chatushpadā*);

(5) measuring out the Seven Notes with *Akshara*.

The Mantra bristles with terminology each of which should be clearly understood as basic to clarify the thought. The literal translation as given by Griffith and Wilson and other translators offer hardly anything to differ, but the crux is the real symbolical meaning which may be consistant with the Vedic metaphysical doctrine. Here we shall try to assess the real import of words in the light of the five-fold measuring out enunciated above :

(1) He has measured out *Arka* with *Gāyatra*. *Gāyatra* is the name of the higher Universal Prāṇa which even inspires the *Gāyatrī* metre and is the real force behind its working, as explained under Mantra 23. *Gāyatrī* is a well-known Chhandas of eight syllables as its measure of each of the three feet. That universal *Gāyatra Prāṇa* was made the instrument of measuring out *Arka*. *Arka* has several meanings, e.g. Sūrya or Āditya (*Ādityo vā Arkaḥ*, ŚB. 10.6.2.6; TB. 1.1.7.2; *Sa esha evārko ya esha Sūryas tapati*, ŚB. 10.4.1.12). *Arka* also means Agni (*ayaṁ vā agnirarkaḥ*, ŚB. 8.6.2.19; 9.4.2.18; 2.5.1.4.; 10.6.2.5). But *Arka* as the Life-Principle itself (*prāṇo vā arkaḥ*, ŚB. 10.4.1.23, 10.6.2.7) is identified in its visible form as the Individual or Purusha himself (*sa eshognir arko yat Purushaḥ*, ŚB. 10.3.4.5.). The Brāhmaṇa writers speak of Yajña at two levels, viz. the universal and the individual. The former is known as *Aśvamedha* and the latter in relation to it, as *Arka*, which two together constitute the *Ojas* and strength of the *Devas* (*Ojo balaṁ vā etau devānāṁ yadarkāśvamedhau*, TB. 3.9.121.3), also identified with the two principles of Prāṇa and Apāna and (*Prāṇāpanau vā etau devānāṁ yadarkāśvamedhau* TB. 3.9.21.3). Thus it is valid to think that Prāṇa manifesting in Matter as *Arka-Purusha*, it measured out in accordance with the Universal Prāṇa, both of which are three-footed like the *Tripadā Gāyatrī*. *Arka* is also the name of a Sāman chant, which is said to have been revealed to Ṛishi Dīrghatamas (*Dīrghatamaso Arko bhavati*, Tāṇḍya 15.3.34). The implication is that Ṛishi Dīrghatamas was concerned more to explain the individual *prāṇāgni* in terms of its universal source, and he therefore was the Seer of the *Arka*-chant.

Arka is the name of a small plant (*Calatropis gigantia*) which thrives best in the hottest part of the year by receiving the energy of the Sun. *Arka* is not merely a plant but, being energised by the solar energy, it is a prototype on earth of Sūrya

in heaven. This is exactly the nature of Purusha, who typifies in Matter the Universal Being. The two are in mutual relationship by a common pulsating Prāṇa, vitalising both of them. The whole measure (*mātrā*) of the *arka* plant, its life-span, or continuity in time, its size, growth, functioning and decay is determined by the *Gāyatra Prāṇa*, which means that fulfilling its life-course on the earth as rooted in the soil, it is receiving its life-force and energy from Sūrya.

What is the measuring element in the *Gāyatra Prāṇa* ? The answer is given in the last line of Mantra 25, that it is the three fuel-sticks, *tisraḥ samidhaḥ* of *Gāyatra*, which serve as the measuring rod of *Arka-Purusha-Prāṇa*. These three sticks burn out one after another in a fixed order and that is the span of life. The three sticks together form one Golden Wheel, *Hiraṇaya Vetasa* or a single pole *Vaṁśa* (RV. 1.10.1—*udvaṁśamiva yemire*, said of Indra, who is compared to both a *Gāyatra* and an *Arka*). In fact, the two aspects of *Gāyatra* and *Arka* both belong to Indra being the two aspects of Prajāpati in his *anirukta* and *nirukta*, *amūrta* and *mūrta* or *amṛita* and *martya* forms. (*gāyanti tvā Gāyatriṇo archantyarkamarkiṇaḥ*, RV. 1.10.1). There are some who think in terms of the Universal *Gāyatra*-Prāṇa and others in terms of the individual centre of Life or *Arka*.

Arka also typifies the principle of Movement which is the same as *Ṛikva* (*Bṛihachchharīro vimimāna ṛikvabhiḥ*, RV. 1.155.6.) or *Ṛik*, which in the *Trayī* doctrine represents the diameter or the measure in which the Centre unfolds itself. This diameter becomes the basis of the measure of the *Maṇḍala* or circumference.

The essence of *Arka* is explained as *Arkya*, the *arka* principle which is based on Movement—*archate vai me kam abhūditi tadeva arkyasyārkatvam* (ŚB. 10.6.5.1). It is the same as *archannacharat* (BU. 1.2.1) i.e. the centre expands or unfolds itself as the manifest form by the power of movement expressed as the adding of point after point on the two sides of the centre. It is said to be effected by the accumulation of Matter round the centre at the lines of its countless diameters. The word *Arkya* is regarded as the form of *Yajus*, symbolising the two opposite principles of *Agni* and *Anna* or *Prāṇa* and *Apāna*, (ŚB. 10.4.1.4).

(2) Sāma is measured out by *Arka*. As explained above *Arka* or *Ṛik* in its manifest form is the *Mūrti* and Sāma is the *Maṇḍala*, also called *tejas* and the dynamism (*gati*) which transforms the centre into its diameter is Yajus (GB. 1.2.9—*ṛichā mūrtir Yājushī gatiḥ, sāmamayaṁ tejaḥ*; also TB. 3.12.9.1). VS. 36.1 equates *Vāk* with *Ṛik; Sāma* with *Prāṇa* and *Yajus* with *Manas*. The manifestation of the *Arka Prāṇa* on the level of Matter vitalised by the energy of the Sun at once determines its *Tejo Maṇḍala* or *Sāma*, which is also known as the *rathantara Sama* of the earth. The circumference (*Sāma-Maṇḍala*) is the outcome of its diameter and is

thrice in length (*ṭrichaṁ sāma*) (*ṛichyadhyūḍhaṁ sāma gīyate*, AV. 2.3.4., ŚB. 8.1.3.3.). A Sāman chant is based on a Ṛik Mantra. Ṛik is the principle of extension and Sāma that of limitation (see my book : 'Vedic-Lectures; *Trayī Vidyā*, p. 13).

(3) *Vāk* is measured out by the power of *Traishṭubha*; *Vāka* as we have said, refers to the principle of the five *bhūtas* or Matter. The power which brings *Vāk* into existence is the *Traishṭubha Prāṇa*, identified with Yajus, which according to the dictum, *Yājushī gatiḥ* of the *Trayī Vidyā* doctrine, belongs to the centre as the twofold principle of Rest and Motion, *Sthiti* and *Gati*, Rest symbolised as *Jūḥ* or *Ākāśa*, space, and Motion as *Yat* or *Vāyu*, which is always moving. Thus, by putting *Yat* and *Juḥ* together the symbol of *Yajjuḥ* or esoterically *Yajuh* is obtained for the relative principle of Rest and Motion.

The *Yājusha Prāṇa* is the same as *Traishṭubha* which prescribes for itself *Vāka* or the *Pañcha Bhūtas*. It is said that Indra is the promotor of *Vāka* (*Vākasya vakshaṇiḥ*) and is pleased with *Arka* (*arkasya śivaḥ*, RV. 8.63.4.) also that the people magnify Indra with Arkas, Sāman Chants and Gāyatras (*tam arkebhis, taṁ sāmabhis, tam Gāyatraiścharshaṇayaḥ*, RV. 8.16.9.).

(4) *Vāk* was measured out by *Vāka*. Here then is a clear reference to two kinds of *Vāk*, one existing in the *Parame Vyoman* as *Parā Vāk*, Transcendent *Vāk*, which is the source of the other *Vāka*, being measured out in Matter. This latter *Vāka* is twofold, namely two-footed and four-footed. The two-footed *Vāka* has reference to the *Vāka* of *Parameshṭhī* known as *Parameshṭhinī Vāk* which consists of the two principles of the Universal Parents, namely, *Parmeshthī* and *Svayaṁbhū*, where *Parameshṭhī* as the Mother-principle supplies the Measure, *Prāṇa*, and *Svayaṁbhu* as the Father-principle supplies the model, *Pratimā*, of the Life-principle that becomes concretised in Matter.

The four-footed *Chatushpadī Vāk* refers to the conception of *Chatush-Pada Ātmā* or *Chatushpada Brahman*, in which the transcendent as the one undifferentiated Principle and the Cosmos are *Idaṁ Sarvam*, as the Trinitarian Principle, combine to make the four components of One Reality (*chatushṭayaṁ vā idaṁ sarvam*). Like the two *Gāyatra* forces, two *Traishṭubha* and two *Jāgata* forces or *Prāṇas*, *Vāka* or the principle of Matter is also twofold, namely the Immortal *Mahā-Bhūtas* which exist in their unmanifest source and the mortal *pañcha bhūtas* which are visible as the Cosmos. *Dvipadā* and *Chatuspadā* have the simple meaning of men and animals, but in fact they are symbolical of the immortal and mortal levels, since man as a biped raises his head above to heaven, he has been accepted as the symbol

of Deva; and the animals as the quadrupeds walk horizontally with the earth, they symbolise Matter.

(5) The seven kinds of metres, *sapta vāṇīḥ*, were measured out by *Akshara*, which is the imperishable unit of Speech, as it is not susceptible to further division. Thus *Akshara* has a two-fold connotation, viz. the uttered single syllable on the plane of matter and the imperishable Principle of Prāṇa or Brahman. The word being used in both senses at one and the same time. After all it is the power of *Akshara* which is identical with *Parā Vāk*, in the highest Empyrean, that is manifesting itself as the seven kinds of rhythmic Speech or Metres, measured out as *Gāyatrī*, *Ushṇik*, *Anushṭup*, *Bṛihatī*, *Virāj*, *Trishṭup* and *Jagatī*, each of six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven and twelve syllabled-Speech respectively. The seven Metres correspond to the sevenfold levels of manifestation from the subtle to the gross, namely, *Manas*, *Prāṇa*, and the *Pañcha Bhūtas*. *Manas* is *Jagatī*, *Prāṇa* is *Trishṭup* and *Gāyatrī* is *Pañcha Bhūtas*, all three knit into a single Rhythm which is Life. It is the *Akshara* which becomes *Kshara* or Matter (*ksharaḥ sarvāṇi bhūtāni*, as stated in this Sūkta itself in Mantra 42–*tataḥ ksharatyaksharam*, of also Gītā, *ksharaḥ sarvāṇi bhūtāni*, *kūṭastho' kshara uchyate*, 15.16).

Another point of view should be clearly understood in order to grasp the full meaning of the symbolism implied in the Mantra. *Prajāpati* desirous of Creation said to himself : let me become one possessed with an Ātman. This was his Thought–*tan mano akuruta ātman vi syām iti*, BU. 1.2.1. The Yaksha of the individuated self residing in the inviolable Golden City of Brahma *aparājitā Hiraṇmayī Brahma Purī*, (AV. 14.2.14) desired to become' *Ātman Vi*, ie., to have a body. The concept of Ātman in this context is explained as the composite form of *Manas*, *Prāṇa* and *Vāk*, Mind, Life and Matter (*etanmayo vā ayam ātmā vāṅmayo manomayaḥ prāṇamayaḥ*, ŚB. 14.4.3.10.). These three factors and their immortal source are the object of the present Mantra. In the statement that the *Gāyatra* measures out the *Arka*, we have a reference to the descent of the Universal in the individual Centre. Then the statement that Arka creates its Sāma, refers to the manifestation of Mind, for *Manas* is the symbol of *Dyuloka* or of Sāma (*mano vāva sāmnaḥ śarīra* JUB. 1.39.2). *Vāka* and *Manas* are said to be a Twin Pair, like Ṛik and Sāma, the two horses of Indra (*Vāk cha vai Manascha devānāṁ mithunam*, AB. 5.23). The statement that *Traishṭubha* furnish the measure for *Vāka* refers to the principle of Prāṇa creating *Vāka* as shown above, and that *Vāk* was measured out by *Vāka* refers to the gross matter being produced from its subtle *Mahā-bhūtas*, which exist in *Avyakta*.

In the last part of the Mantra, the Ṛishi is thinking of the seven elements of *Buddhi*, *Ahaṁkāra* and the *Pañcha-Bhūtas*, which of course represent the seven moda-

lities of manifestation exemplified as the seven metres or which is the same as *Manas*, *Prāṇa* and *Vāk*, existing originally in *Avyakta* or unmanifest *Prakṛiti*, that was stirred into activity by the power of *Akshara* or the Imperishable Immortal Principle known as *Prāṇa*, *Indra*, *Prājña*, *Brahma* and many other names (*Yaddvevavākṣharam akshīyata, tasmād akshayam, akshayaṁ ha vai nāmaitat tadaksharamiti paroksham āchakshate,* JUB. 1. 24. 2; *Katamat tadaksharamiti, yat ksharannakshīyata iti, Indra iti,* JUB. 1. 43. 8). The Brāhmaṇa writers are emphatic in saying that the *Akshara* creates the *Kshara*, i.e. the Deva becomes transformed as Matter, as *Bhūta* (*tad yadaksharat tasmād aksharam,* ŚB. 6. 1. 3. 6, JUB. 1. 24. 1). In short the *Virāj* or the Universal Principle is *Akshara* which as the Great Mother or *Avyakta* or *Pradhāna*, is producing the manifest form (*virājo vā etad rūpaṁ yadaksharam,* Tāṇḍya 8. 6. 14). The Principle of Matter is a Yajña, but a leaking bucket which the immortal *Akshara* alone keeps whole by plugging its leaking openings (*akshareṇaiva yajñasya chhidram apidadhāti,* Tāṇḍya, 8.6.13).



MANTRA 25

जगता सिन्धुं दिव्यस्तभायद् रथन्तरे सूर्यं पर्यपश्यत् ।
गायत्रस्य समिधस्तिस्र आहुस्ततो मह्ना प्र रिरिचे महित्वा ॥

—ऋ० वे० १।१६४।२५॥

With *Jagatī* he established the Ocean's Flood in Heaven, and in *Rathantara Sāman* he found Surua.

They say that *Gāyatrī* has three fuel-sticks ; from their majesty it gains its vigourous might.[25]

This Mantra continuing the *Chhando Vidyā* explains the mutual relationship of *Jagatī* and *Gāyatrī*. *Jagatī* is, as we have said, the metre vitalised by the *Jāgata Prāṇa*. By the power of Jagatī, the infinite ocean of primeval prāṇic energy that is in the immortal heaven (*dyuloka*) is spported. That Ocean (*Sindhu*) is referred to in VS. 16. 4 which ŚB explains as Prāṇa (*Prāṇo vai Sindhuśchhandaḥ*, ŚB. 6. 5. 2. 4). The implication is that at one end of the Golden Reed or the *Axis Mundi* is *Prāṇa* and at the other *Bhūta*. It is like a mother enclosed between two shells of Heaven and Earth (*Dyāvā pṛithivī*), the one signifying the immortal and the other the mortal. This symbolism is a recurrent theme and one cannot overestimate its significance to understand the Vedic thought and the varied terminology employed in the Mantras to elaborate it. The Ocean mentioned here is the unmanifest Source of Creation which is the same as the *Manas* and *prāṇa* of *Prajāpati*.

In the second part of the Mantra the *Rathantara Sāman* is said to reflect the glory of Sūrya. This is the new doctrine of *Atimāna* in which the music of heaven and earth is said to be mingling with each other by its sound-light and energy radiations. It is in fact the symphony of the music of the spheres according to which the entire universe with all its stars and constellations, galaxies is producing a unified choral song or in Vedic language, an eternal Sāman chant, known as the *Bṛihat*

[25] *Griffith*—With Jagatī the flood in heaven he established, and saw the Sun in the Rathantara Sāman.

Gāyatrī hath, they say, three brands for kindling; Hence it excels in majesty and vigour.

Wilson—With the stanzas in the Jagatī metre he fixed the rain in heaven, and surveyed the Sun in the Rathantara. They have declared three divisions of the Gāyatrī metre, whence it surpasses (all the rest) in force and majesty.

Sāma, the Great Symphony. According to the esoteric doctrine of *Sāma Vidyā*, Sūrya and Pṛithivī each has its own Sāman chant; that of Sūrya is called *Bṛihat* (*asau dyuloko bṛihat*, AB. 8. 2; *āditya bṛihat*, AB. 5. 30) and that of Pṛithivī is called *Rathantara* (*Iyaṁ Pṛithivī rathantaram*, AB. 8. 1), Sūrya is the Father-principle and Pṛithivī the Mother, and it is essential in the scheme of creation that the two chants of the Father and the Mother unite with each other in a single tune. It is the same thing as the Prāṇic and the material modalities becoming unified for the descent of light in the *Bhūtas*.

The Bṛihat Sāma of Sūrya expands its orbit towards the earth or Motherhood or Gāyatrī and the Rathantara Sāma of Pṛithivī goes out to meet the expanding waves of the solar chant or energy radiations of whatever form. The point where the two meet and mingle with each other is called *Rathantara*, because the Cosmic Ratha or Chariot crosses beyond its own sphere to meet the immortal source of energy coming to it from the Solar Orb in heaven or more truly the Supernal Sun of which this Sūrya is merely a symbol (*Brahma Sūrya-samaṁ Jyotiḥ*, VS. 23. 48). Thus the dynamic vibrations or radiations or energy-waves or Sāma songs, or whatever name we may choose, are overlapping and that is known as the *Atimāna* of the two Sāmans. Truly speaking, each of them both in depth and spatial as well as temporal extension have its measure (*māna*) or limit of spheres; but since like the cells of the body, they are all interconnected as a single *Yajña* of *Prajāpati*, it is conceived that the *Bṛihat Sama* of Sūrya which is compared to an Ocean of Prāṇic waves and the *Rathantara Sāma* of the Earth which is conceived of as a Moving Giant Chariot come together and become attuned. This is the idea in the first two parts of the Mantra.

The *Rathantara Sāma* belonging to the Earth does not end with the limited measure of the Earth but it crosses the pathways of its Charriot and therefore, literally called *Rathantara*. If the Mother-principle were to remain confined to its own centre, there would be no progenition. When we mention *Bṛihat* and *Rathantara*, we are obliged to invoke the whole gamut of the basal duality of creation; e.g. *Pṛithivī* is *Rathantara*, *Dyuloka* is *Bṛihat*;

Rathantara is *Vāk* and *Brighat* is *Manas* (AB. 4. 28).

Rathantara is *Ṛig Veda* and *Bṛihat* is *Sāma Veda* (Tāṇḍya, 7. 6. 17).

Night is of the nature of *Rathantara* and Day is of *Bṛihat* (*Rāthantarī vai rātrir, ahar bārhatam*, AB. 5. 30).

The *Bṛihat Sāma* is said to be the *finale* of all symphonies (*anto bṛihat sāmnām*, Tāṇḍya, 19. 12. 8). It is the mightiest and excellent of all chants (*śraishṭhyaṁ*

vai bṛihat, jyaishṭhyam vai bṛihat, AB. 8. 2). It is said to be like the eldest son of Prajāpati (Tāṇḍya, 7. 6. 6) and rooted in the *Ūrdhva* or the navel or the *hṛidaya* of the Creator (Tāṇḍya, 8. 9. 11). Naturally, the *Bṛihat Sāman* of Āditya controlled by the power of *Jagatī* comes first into existence as the primeval principle and then follows the *Rathantara Sāman* of each created object or life-centre (*Bṛihaddhi pūrvaṁ rathantarāt*, Tāṇḍya, 11. 1. 4). *Bṛihat* is great or universal; *Rathantara* is *hrasva*, small or individual (*yadhrasvaṁ tad Rathantaraṁ yad dīrghaṁ tad Bṛihat*, KB. 3. 5). The *Rathantara Sāma* is a synonym of *Deva Ratha*, the Cosmic Wheel with an endless assemblage of Time-Space relata, (*devaratho vai rathantaraṁ*, Tāṇḍya, 7. 7. 13).

The doctrine of the Three Metres functioning conjointly is known as *Tri-Suparṇa Vidyā* elaborated in the Aitereya Brāhmaṇa (3. 25. 27), Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa (3. 6. 2. 1-26, also 3. 2. 4. 1), Tait. Saṁ (6. 1. 6. 1-6) and Mait. Saṁ (3. 7. 8). According to this legend, *Jagatī* first flew to heaven for bringing the Jar of Soma but came back unsuccessful leaving behind one of its feet; then she was followed by Trishṭup with the same plight; and then Gāyatrī flapping its two wings reached the immortal heaven and transferred the Soma Jar from sky to the earth. It so happened because Gāyatrī having its root in the earth was endowed with the faculty of coming and going (*etyai pretyai*, VS. 27. 45, *eti cha preti cha*, AB. 15. 16) or as it is said, possess the power of contraction and expansion (*samañchana-prasāraṇam* ŚB. 8. 1. 4. 10; *saṁchāñcha pra cha sāraya*, VS. 27. 45; see my 'Vedic Lectures', p. 34; also 'Sparks From The Vedic Fire'. *Suparṇa*, p. 57 and 102).

The question arises as to why, where the flight of Jagatī and Trishṭup fails, the rhythmic vibrations of Gāyatrī succeed. The answer is that Gāyatrī is the metre or rhythmic vibrations of the earth, i. e. Life in Matter, whereas Trishṭup is merely *Prāṇa* and Jagatī *Manas,* the latter two being ineffective unless rooted in the *pañcha bhūtas* or functioning on the plane of the body. Gāyatrī therefore gets the reflection of Sūrya in her Rathantara chant—*Rathantare Sūryam paryapaśyat.* In terms of the latter philosophy it is the same as *chid-ābhāsa*, i. e. Immortal Consciousness (*Chit*) or (*Chetanā*), being imaged in the mortal body. That is the *Parā Prakṛiti* descending to the level of the *Aparā*, the *Akshara-purusha* and the *Kshara-purusha* coming together.

Just as Prajāpati desirous for creation has an *īkshaṇa*, a vision, by which he creates the principles of Mind, Life and Matter, similarly Earth, Motherhood or Matter or Mahat, Yoni of Rathantara prepare themselves to receive a reflection of the Prāṇic Ocean in the immortal heaven and that is the idea in the line *Rathantara Sūryaṁ paryapaśyat*. The implication is that although Jagatī or the immortal heaven or *Bṛihat Sāma* is mighty and great, yet Pṛithivī or Gāyatrī is no less impor-

tant or rather more important from the point of view of material life; therefore, the Ṛishi extols the greatness of Gāyatrī or its Prāṇic energy, called Gāyatra. Wherever there is life in the body, it is governed by the triple principle of birth, growth and decay, three phases unfolding by the power of Time or *Saṁvatsara*. What these mysterious forces corresponding to boyhood, youth and age are, is revealed to everyone in his own life-span. These are termed here as the three Fire-Sticks which contain the Gāyatra energy, i. e. the energy bestowed on them by the creative principle of Motherhood. Even while the child is in the womb being processed from the condition of the first fertilised ovum or zygote to the full-fledged foetus through the most subtle laws of Motherhood in which according to the Vedic view all the divine and earthly powers take part in producing the babe, the triadic pattern of material manifestation acts as the foundation of the making of the embryo. Those trinitarian principles call them by any name we will, are symbolised as the Fire Sticks of Gāyatrī (*Gāyatrasya samidhas tisra āhuḥ*). In the daily *Agnihotra*, these three fuel-sticks are offered to the Fire. The Ṛishi thinks that these sticks burn out and release their hidden majesties (*mahnā pra ririche*) in regular succession. There are two words, *mahnā* and *mahitvā*, the former referring to the intrinsic power on the unmanifest plane and the latter to the evolving power in material manifestation. The word, *pra riricāna*, is also significant as a doctrine signifying that after each new creation out of its own self, the creative centre or the source of energy becomes depleted and requires to be replenished again by performing *tapas*. This is also known as *visraṁsana* or exhaustion (*sa yaḥ sa prajāpatir vyasraṁsata, ayameva sa yo'yamagnischīyate*, ŚB. 8. 2. 2. 6). We are aware of the great law in thermo-dynamics that each centre of energy is spending itself by a flow from the higher to the lower level and that it must be replenished from any source, since without recharge it will meet with extinction. So even the great Creator is conceived of as being governed by this law, that after each creativity he exhausts himself (*prajāpatiḥ prajāḥ srishṭvā vyasraṁsata*, ŚB. 6. 1. 2. 12; after running the full race, he was just spent-up; *sarvam ājim itvā vyasraṁsata*, ŚB. 6. 1. 2. 12).

When the Gods saw Prajāpati in this hapless condition they took his body to Parameshthī or the universal Immortal who placed his head in his lap and revitalised and normalised him (*prajāpatiṁ visrastaṁ devatādayo vyudakrāmaṁs tasya prajāpteḥ parameshthī śirah ādāyotkramyātishṭhat*, ŚB. 8. 7. 3. 1). Just as for Prajāpati, so for the cosmos and the individual, there is a single and similar law of energy depleting and replenishing.

What were the contents of Prajāpati of which he became empty (*Rikta*) ? The answer is that he was possessed of Three Lights on the level of Mind (*trīṇi*

jyotīṁshi sachate sa shoḍaśī, VS. 8. 36; also called *trirochanā*, RV. 5. 29. 1, 4. 53. 5); fivefold *paśus*, by which he creates the pentadic form of Yajña; and seven Jewels (*sapta ratna*) which are treasured by him in a Jewel Chest, *Vasudāna Kośa*, which is this body. These three symbolise threefold Prajāpati as *Manas*, *Prāṇa* and *Vāk*; when these are spent up on the plane of Matter, their refill exists in the immortal aspect of Prajāpati himself. According to the primeval ordinances, the immortal and the mortal both have been conceived in the nature of Yajña (*Yajñena yajñam ayajanta devāstāni dharmāṇi prathamānyāsan*, RV. 10. 90. 16); and they are also spoken of as belonging to the same womb (*amartyo martyenā sayoniḥ*, RV. 1. 164. 30). Prajāpati's mortal self is the cosmos that is subject to the rhythm of becoming empty and refilled on the universal plane and in each centre, as stated in the Mantra.

In one of the Ṛig Vedic verses (RV. X. 124. 1), these three aspects of Prajāpati as Yajña are mentioned :

(1) *Trivṛit* referring to the three Lights of Mind, Life and Matter;

(2) Five forces, *pañcha-yāma*, or the fivefold *prāṇic forces*;

(3) *Sapta tantu*, the Seven Threads or the Seven Ratnas with reference to the seven components of lower nature, the *pañcha bhūtas*, *ahaṁkāra* and *Buddhi*.





Mantra 26-कामदुघा धेनु

The Wish-Fulfilling Cow

MANTRA 26

उप॑ ह्वये सु॒दुघां॑ धे॒नुमे॒तां सु॒हस्तो॑ गो॒धुगु॒त दो॑हदेनाम्।
श्रेष्ठं॑ स॒वं स॑वि॒ता सा॑विषन्नो॒ऽभीद्धो॑ घ॒र्मस्तदु॒ षु प्र वो॑चम् ॥

—ऋ० वे० १।१६४।२६॥

I invoke the Cow good for milking, so that the milker deft of hand may milk her.

May Savitar give us excellent *sava* (distilled liquid or stimulation). The Boiler is made hot; that is what I declare.[26]

Mantras 26-29 take up the imagery of the Cow as applied to Mother Nature or the principle of Motherhood both in the universal and in the individual.

The doctrine of the Cow (*govidyā*) scintillates with many meanings in the Ṛig Veda. The Cow, Calf, Milk, Butter, her lowing, her movement, her fodder, pastures for grazing, the cow-pen (*Vraja-Goshṭhāna*), all these are frequently mentioned as elements of an elaborate symbolism, having a definite place and significance in building up the cosmogonical thought. The Cow is called *Aditi, Viśvarūpā, Viśvadhāyā, Kevalī, Virāj, Vasupatnī,* and so on. She is the Great Principle of Motherhood, identified with universal Nature or Infinity. Her Calf is the Life-principle, *Prāṇa*, identified as Sūrya or Nārāyaṇa, son of Aditi in later Purāṇic legends. The Cosmos is the Milk, which the Infinite Cow produces. The Butter churned out of the milk is the seed which creates the cosmic form on the one hand (*Bhuvanasya retaḥ*) and the individual forms on the other (*retaḥ kṛitvājyaṁ devāḥ purushamāviśan*, AV. 11. 8. 29). Mantras 5, 7, 8, 9, 17, 26, 27, 28, 29, 31, 40, 41, 42, 49 of this Sūkta invoke the symbolism of the Cow in one way or the other. 28 Mantras of the Asya Vāmīya Sūkta are captioned in the Atharva as of Virāj (AV. 9. 10. 1-28). An elaborate description of *Virāj* is given in AV. 8. 9. 1-26 where she is called *Kevalī, Gṛishṭi, Aditi, Māyā, Ṛitasya Prathamajā, Vaiśvā-*

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[26] *Griffith*—I invocate the milch-cow good for milking, so that the milker, deft of hand, may drain her.

May Savitar give goodliest stimulation. The cauldron is made hot; I will proclaim it.

Wilson—I invoke the milch-cow that is easily milked, that the handy milker may milk her: may Savitṛi accept this our excellent libation, that his heat may (thereby) increase : it is for this, verily, that I earnestly invoke him.

narasya Pratimā, Bṛihatī, Sūryapatnī, Janitrī, etc. It is there established beyond all doubt that the Universal Cow is the Great Mother Nature who sustains with her milk the Ṛishis, gods, men and asuras. There it is asked : Who knows where she mates, who knows her seasons, who knows her mind, who knows her steps, who knows her milkings, who knows her stations, who knows her mornings ? (AV. 8. 9. 10). She is the procreative Bride, the Greatest of the Majesties are in her womb (*mahānto asyāṁ mahimāno antarvadhūrjigāya navagajjanitrī*, AV. 8. 9. 11). The Mother-principle in her is triumphant and prevails amongst all men.

In the Atharva Veda we again find the glorification of the Cow, named *Śataudanā*, i. e. of Hundredfold Oblations, in which each oblation is a Yajña and thus the Cow of Hundred Sacrifices is no other than the Great Mother Nature herself, actually so described in the Sūkta (AV. 10. 9. 1-27). In another hymn the Holy Cow named *Vaśā*, the Loved One, or the Cow placed under one's control is glorified in the same exalted strain (AV. 10. 10. 1-34; also AV. 12. 4. 1-53). She is called *Yajña-Padī*, having the many systems of Sacrifice as her foot-steps, and *Svadhā-Prāṇā*, that is having the principle of *Svadhā* or Motherhood as her Breath : she is truly the Great One (*mahīlukā*, AV. 10. 10. 6). All the gods live in her body, and therefore, she is truly named as *Vaiśvadevī* (*ye devāstasyāṁ prāṇanti*, AV. 10. 10. 5). She is the Milch-cow with a Thousand Streams, (*Sahasradhārā*, AV. 10. 10. 4); and she has created heaven and earth.

In the present Mantra and the three following, Ṛishi Dīrghatamas is formulating his cosmogonical ideas in terms of the Cow symbolism. It is said that the Cow is easy to milk (*sudughā dhenu*), which is the same as *kāmadughā*, the Wish-fulfilling Mother and that is indeed her excellent nature that she gives what is desired of her. Each individual is invoking the blessings of such a Cow for obtaining all that he needs on the plane of Mind, Life and Matter.

In the Purāṇas we have an elaborate conception of the Cosmic Cow as *Trayīmayī Dhenu* with four teats, shedding four streams of milk, by which four kinds of creatures are nourished, Ṛishis, Pitṛis, Devas and Men. Clarifying these symbols we might say that the principle of Mind is represented as Ṛishi, that of Life as Deva and that of Matter as the Pitṛis or the two Parents which produce the body. All these three exist separately under these three categories, but collectively they become manifest in a composite form (*hantakāra*—literally that which becomes a *saṅghāta*, or *Purusha* where *Manas, Prāṇa* and *Vāk* become integrated into a single system). As Griffith has observed, *Virāj* is mentioned in Ṛig Veda (10. 90. 5) where it is said to be born from *Purusha*, the primeval Male from whom the *Virāj* or female *Prakṛiti* with universal form was evolved. *Virāj* is clearly the same as *Avyakta*,

Pradhāna or *Prakriti* of later philosophers, also identified with *Vāk* or the *Pañch-bhūtas* and symbolically spoken of as the Cow. The basic idea of milking the cow is elaborated at great length in the *Virāj Sūktas* where Prithu is said to have performed the milking of the *Virāj* cow (AV. 8. 10. 1-6; 66 mantras in all see my 'Matsya Purāṇa—A Study', pp. 79-84). What is named *Vaśā* is implied here in the epithet *Sudughā*, i. e., the upright Cow whom one may milk at will but for this a skilled milker is required (*suhasta godhuk*).

The third part of the Mantra refers to Savitā and its excellent *Sava*. *Savitā* is Mind-Prāṇa (*Prajñatmā Prāṇa*) which is the principal impelling force by which consciousness comes into existence (*mano vai Savitā*, ŚB. 6. 3. 1. 13; *prāṇo vai Savitā*, AV. 1. 19). The descent of *Manas* and *Prāṇa* in Matter is a Birth (*prasava*) of *Vāja* which has several meanings but essentially signifying the principle of *Vāk* (*Vāgvai Vājasya prasavaḥ*, TB. 1. 3. 2. 5). *Sava* is translated as 'stimulation' by Griffith and this is right to an extent as the milk of the Cow is the food which produces energy and thus Sāvitrī and Sarasvatī are also names of the Universal Cow, i. e. *Virāj*. In simple language, *Sava* is Milk (as taken by Sāyaṇa, *Savaṁ kshīram*), that is being boiled in the cauldron of the body (*gharma*). The word *gharma* literally means Heat or Temperature, but in terms of ritual it is a big Pot for boiling milk called *Mahāvīra*. The Brāhmaṇa writers explain both Agni on earth and Sūrya in heaven as the two *gharmas* (*agnirvai gharmaḥ*, ŚB. 11. 6. 2. 2; *āditya vai gharmaḥ*, 11. 6. 2. 2. KB. 2. 1), the two together forming a Divine Pair, *deva mithuna* (GB. 2. 2. 6, AB. 1. 22). The meaning is that the individual body and the cosmos both are the Two Boilers which are inter-related (*gharmā samantā*, RV. 10. 114. 1; see my paper : 'Symbolism Of The Two Boilers', Viśveśvarānanda Indological Journal, Vol. 1, pt. 1, pp. 40-42).

Like one, two, three *Suparṇas*, we also have one, two, three *Gharmas*, the three *gharma* pots being mentioned in AV. 8. 9. 13, where it is stated that the Three Mothers came along the path of *Ṛita* and as soon as the germ was deposited in them, the three *gharmas* came into existence (*ṛitasya panthām anu tisra āhustrayo gharmā anureta āguḥ*, AV. 8. 9. 13), and also in AV. 9. 1. 8, where the second line of Mantra 28 has a variant reading and instead of a single *gharma*, three are mentioned (*trīn gharmān abhi vāvaśānā, mimāti māyuṁ payate payobhiḥ*, AV. 9. 1. 8). The three boiling pots are the various triads inherent in the cosmic pattern, e. g., Agni, Vāyu and Aditya; Prithivī, Antariksha, Dyauh, etc; and in the clearest terms they imply the three great principles of Mind, Life and Matter (*Manas*, *Prāṇa* and *Vāk*) which are present in the human body and so long as the original Heat or Temperature is boiling, Energy-Milk is being manufactured in the mysterious laboratory of the body.

The word *abhīddha gharma* is the same as *abhīddha tapas* (RV. 10. 190. 1) or *agraja tapas* or *devaushṇyaṁ prāsuvat* (MU. 2. 6). Temperature is Life (*yadaushṇyaṁ sa puru-shaḥ*, MU. 2. 6). This extreme Temperature was the primeval Heat which, because it existed in the beginning, became known as Agni (*sa yadasya sarvasyāgram asṛijyata tasmāt agrir, agrirha vai tam agnirityāchakshate paroksham*, ŚB. 6. 1. 1. 11, 2. 2. 4. 2). Thus *gharma* and *Agni* are identical as clearly stated in the Brāhmaṇas [*asya* (*agneḥ*) *evaitāni* (*gharmaḥ arkaḥ, śūkla jyotiḥ, sūryaḥ nāmāni*, ŚB. 9. 4. 2. 25]. In Mantra 24 the symbolism of *arka* has been explained and here we find the same exemplified as *gharma* or the Boiling Milk-Pot in which milk and butter are mingled together. When the milk is red-hot streams of butter are poured in it, stirring blazing flames.

In this ceremony named *Mahā Vīra* or *Gharma*, the Milk in the heated pot symbolises the principle of Motherhood or the Mother's Womb, and the Stream of Butter is the symbol of the Father's Seed fecundating the Mother. This is considered to be a very solemn aspect of the universal Prāṇa which for the sake of the birth of the Babe has to descend to the level of Matter. Therefore, it is also named as a *chhinnasśīrsha Yajña*, i. e. the Sacrifice whose head was severed from its original heavenly source. In fact one of the explanations of *Gharma* as giving its esoteric etymology is that the head of Vishṇu detached from its link with the universal source, fell down, producing the sound, *Ghṛiṅ*, and therefore, became known as *gharma* (*tad yad* (*chhinnaṁ Vishṇoḥ śiraḥ*) *ghṛiṅ-ityapatat, tasmāt gharmaḥ*, ŚB. 14. 1. 110). The semantic meaning of *Ghṛiṅ* is the same as *ksharaṇa*, from the root—*ghriṅ ksharaṇe*, referred to in Mantra 42 of this Sūkta (*tasyāḥ samudrā adhivikshāranti, tataḥ ksharātyaksharam*).

As a matter of fact, the principle of Agni becoming *Jātavedā* after birth, *Arka* and *Gharma*, all three are identified in the Ṛig Veda itself (RV. 3. 26. 7, VS. 18. 66) where the *gharma* is called Exhaustless Heat, *ajasra gharma*, i. e. the Boiling Milk-Pot of Sūrya placed in the immortal Heaven, fed by unending fuel from an unmanifest source that is in the Universal. Each *gharma* or Milk-Pot on the plane of Matter is the symbol of Yajña, presided over by Daksha, the presiding genius of Sacrifice, which in its individuated consciousness was cut off from its source; thereby the sacrifice of Daksha became doomed until his head was replaced by that of *Aja* (the Unborn Goat), which is the same as the self-existent Creator, *Svayambhū Prajāpati*.

MANTRA 27

हिङ्कृण्वती वसुपत्नी वसूनां वत्समिच्छन्ती मनसाभ्यागात् ।
दुहामश्विभ्यां पयो अघ्न्येयं सा वर्धतां महते सौभगाय ॥

—ऋ० वे० १।१६४।२७॥

She, the Cow, Guardian Mother of the Eight Vasus, yearning in spirit for her Calf, has come hither uttering the '*hiṅkāra*' sound.

May we milk her for the two Aśvins, she is the inviolable deathless Cow. May she prosper to our high advantage.[27]

Four statements are made in this Mantra :

(1) the Cow is the Protector or Mother of the *Vasus* (*Vasupatnī*, *Vasūnāṁ pālayitrī*);

(2) her heart is full of affection for the Calf of whom she thinks with her mind and for whom it utters the sound *Hiṅ*;

(3) she produces the milk for the two Aśvins;

(4) as the inviolable Mother, may she increase for greater prosperity to us.

The epithet *Vasupatnī* is significant. The number of *Vasus* is eight and they represent the eight principles of manifestation, viz. (1) Mind, (2-3) *Prāṇa* and *Apāna*, and (4-8) five gross elements of matter, *pañcha bhūtas*. These were named *Vasu* because their presence is essential for manifestation of Life in Matter (*te yadidaṁ sarvaṁ vāsayante tasmād vasava iti*, ŚB. 11. 6. 3. 6). The names of the eight *Vasus* are, according to Śatapatha Br., Pṛithvī, Antariksha=*Āpaḥ* (*antarikshaṁ vā apām sadhastham*, ŚB. 7. 5. 2. 7), Agni, Vāyu, Dyauḥ Ākāśa, Āditya, Chandramā and Nakshatra=Brahma, that which is not *kshatra* (ŚB. 11. 6. 3. 6). This etymology of *Nakshatra* is approved by Pāṇini (6. 3. 7 5). *Kshatra* is temporal power, the opposite of which is Brahma, referring to spiritual authority, same as *Brāh-*

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[27] *Griffith*—She, lady of all treasure, is come hither yearning in spirit for her calf and lowing.

May this cow yield her milk for both the Aśvins, and may she prosper to our high advantage.

Wilson—She comes lowing, abounding in rich (products), desiring her calf in her mind: may this cow grant her milk to the Aśvins ; may she thrive for our great advantage.

maṇa, *Yajamāna* or *Dīkshita* (Liṅga Purāṇa, 2. 12. 43-44, *Ātmā tasyāshṭamī mūrtir yajamānāhvayā parā, Dīkshitaṁ Brāhmaṇāṁ prāhur ātmānam cha munīśvarāḥ*). Kālidāsa mentions them as the eight forms of Śiva (*ashṭamūrti Śiva*) in the first verse of Sākuntala (see Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa, 52. 3-9; for an interpretation of the Ashṭa Mūrti doctrine based on the Vedic conception of the eight *Vasus*, see my "Sparks from The Vedic Fire", '*Ashṭa Mūrti* Śiva'; pp. 117-122). This is confirmed in another statement of Vedic symbolism where the Cow is named Aditi (*mā gām anāgām aditiṁ vadhishṭa*) and Aditi is said to be the Mother with eight wombs (*ashṭa yoniḥ*) who gave birth to the eight Āditya gods (*ashṭau putrāso aditeḥ*, RV. 10. 72. 8; also, *Aditir ashṭaputrā*, AV. 8. 9. 21).

The word *hiṅkṛiṇvatī* is important. There are two symbols, namely, *Hiṅ*, and *Hum*. *Hiṅ* is the voice of deep love rising from the heart, i. e. the mother's affection completely given through her mind, *prāṇa* and *bhūtas* for the sake of the child, suckled or nurtured by her. On the other hand, *huṁ* is its opposite, symbolising the sound of chastisement and destruction as in the Yajur Veda (*bhaṅgena hato' sau phaṭ*, VS. 7. 3; same as '*huṁ phaṭ*', the tāntric *Bīja-akshara*). *Hiṅkāra* and *Huṁkāra* are the two aspects of the same *Vāk*, one is *saumya* and the other is *ghora*; *Hiṅkāra* is *Daivī* and *Huṁkāra* is *Āsurī Vāk*; the one is divine and the other is demoniacal. The lowing of the Mother Cow for her Calf is pregnant with cosmic benevolence and although in terms of wave-length it may be a feeble lowing, in depth and emotional intensity there is nothing to compare with the loving Silence of the Mother for the Babe. The poet says that this Voice of *Hiṅkāra* originates in the mind of the Mother out of her affection for the Calf.

The third point is about the person for whom the Milk is produced by the Cow. The answer is that the two Aśvins, namely, *Prāṇa* and *Apāna*, drink the milk which the gracious Mother yields from her breast. It is the potency of the vital airs, manifesting as In-breath and Out-breath which sustains this body through life and which assimilates the food by which all kinds of physical, vital and mental energy is produced. The two Aśvins are comparable to the *Dioscuri* or the two Centaurs riding together, and are spoken of as the two priests of the bodily sacrifice (*aśvināvadhvaryū* AV. 1. 18, ŚB. 11. 2. 17).

They are also said to symbolise several other pairs as Dyāvā-Pṛithivī, Agni-Āditya, the two Ears, the two Nostrils, and the two Eyes (ŚB. 12. 9. 1. 12-14). They are said to be wearing a lotus garland,. Agni being the Lotus of the Earth, and Āditya of Heaven (*Agnirevāsyai pushkaram āditya' mushyai*, ŚB. 4. 1. 5. 16). The Ṛig Veda refers to them as the two physicians of the gods, *Daivyā bhishajā śannaḥ karato aśvinā*, RV. 8. 18. 8; AB. 1. 18; KB. 18. 1; TB. 1. 7. 3. 5; GB. 2. 2. 6. Al-

though diversified in manifest form they belong to a single womb (*sayonī vā aśvinau*, ŚB. 5. 3. 1. 8). In fact Sūrya is symbolised as the Great Horse (*asau vā Ādityo aśvaḥ*, TB. 3. 9. 23. 2) and the two Aśvins are but the two aspects of the movement of the solar rays, namely, contraction and expansion.

In Mantra 49 of this Sūkta, the Cow is also spoken of as Sarasvatī with a breast full of sustenance and bliss, and knowing the *Vasus* (*Vasuvid*). In VS. 19. 94 Sarasvatī as the gaurdian Mother is said to bear the two Aśvins in her womb; (*Sarasvatī yonyāṁ garbhamantaraśvibhyāṁ patnī sukṛitaṁ bibharti*, VS. 19. 94) and the milk of her breast oozes out for the two Aśvin Healers (*Aśvibhyāṁ dugdhaṁ bhishajā sarasvatyā*, VS. 19. 95). That Milk is the Immortal Soma (*Amṛitaḥ Soma Induḥ*, VS. 19. 95). In the Madhukaśā Sūkta, it is stated that the vast cosmos is the milk of the Universal Cow.



MANTRA 28

गौरमीमेदनु वत्सं मिषन्तं मूर्धानं हिङ्ङकृणोन्मातवा उ ।
सृक्वाणं घर्ममभि वावशाना मिमाति मायुं पयते पयोभिः ॥

—ऋ० वे० १।१६४।२८॥

The Cow is lowing for her blinking Calf. She gives a sniff kiss on his head, so that he may also low.

His mouth she fondly invites to her warm udder, and suckles him with milk while gently lowing.[28]

In Mantra 9 the Ṛishi has already spoken of the Calf bleating and now he refers to the Mother Cow as lowing, in both cases the verb *amīmet* also signifying a measuring out of the cosmos or the possibilities in the creational act of Prajāpati. The blinking youngling of the Cow or Infinite Mother is Sūrya, or for the matter of that, each manifest centre of life which opens its eyes on the conscious world. Birth is conceived of as an awakening (*jāgaraṇa*) and the Mother's affection for the Babe is expressed in her giving a sniffkiss on his forehead (*mūrdhānaṁ hiṅṅakṛiṇot*). It is the same as *Hiṅkāra* of the previous Mantra, the voice of affection rises from the heart. Essentially a *Bījākshara* or *Bija Mantra*, *Hiṁ* is the symbol of both Mind and Matter in which '*Ha*' as the consonant stands for the *Bhūtas* and '*I*' as a vowel for the Mind and the nasal sound for the Prāṇic element.

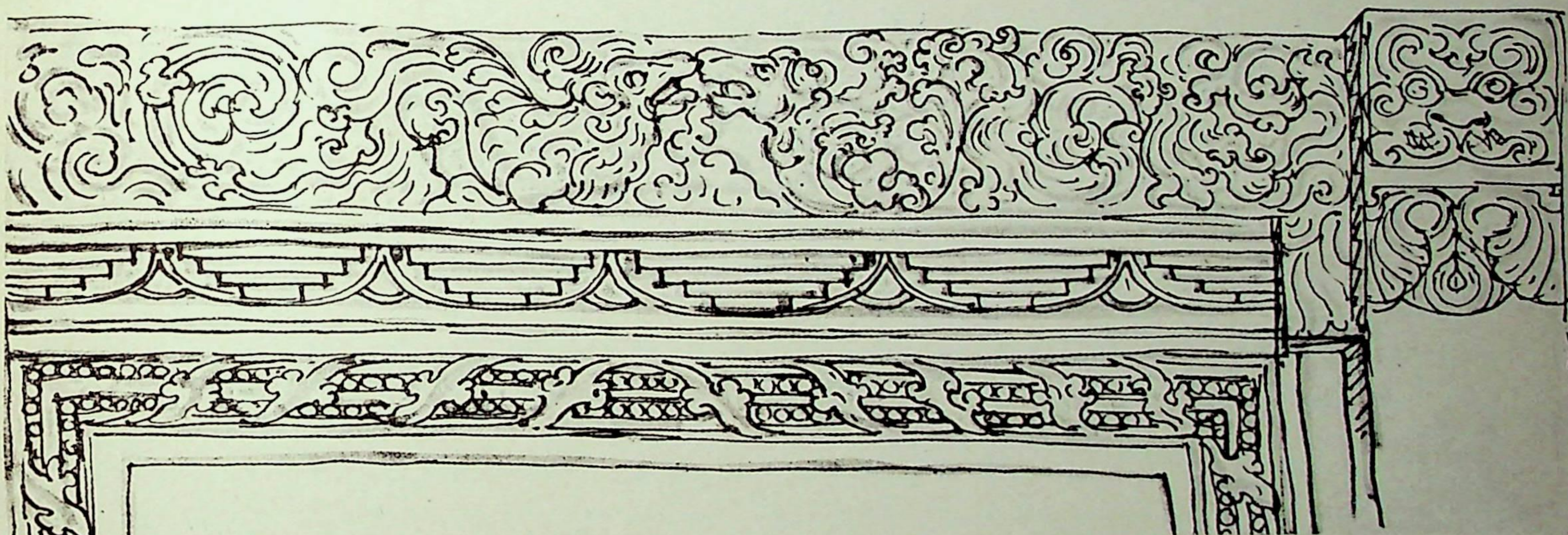
Why should the Mother Cow sniff the Calf on the head ? The reason is that the head is the symbol of *Dyauḥ* or the immortal *Devas* where all the thought-centres are located (*śīrshṇo dyauḥ samavartata*). Each Calf is an embodiment of *Prāṇāgni*, a perfect symbol of the Life-principle and this holds good in the case of each individual and the universal, both of which are related to each other as the

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[28] *Griffith*—The cow hath lowed after her blinking youngling ; she licks his forehead, as she lows, to form it.

His mouth she fondly calls to her warm udder, and suckles him with milk while gently lowing.

Wilson—The cow bellows for her calf, (who stands) with winking eyes, and lows as (she) proceeds to lick his forehead : she utters a cry, as anxious, she sees the moisture in the corners of his mouth, and nourishes him with her milk.



Mantra 28—गौरमीमेदनुवत्सं मिषन्तं मूर्धानं हिङ्ङकृणोन्मातवा उ। The Cow Giving Sniff-kiss to her Calf

thousand-rayed Sūrya is related to each ray. The opening and closing of the eye by the Calf is symbolical of the forces and energies which make up life as being rhythmic or cyclic. Even the great Sūrya is looked upon by the Ṛishi as a blinking Calf, Night and Day being the opening and closing of his eyes, and this process extending through the two halves of the year is exemplified in all the vast durations of Time, including creation and dissolution of the worlds.

The question as to why does the Mother Cow sniff or lick the Calf is answered by saying : that it desires to bestow upon it a measured form (*mimāti māyum*). This is what each Mother does for the child she bears in her womb. The word *mātā* literally means *she who confers a measure* on what is produced by her. The measure set by the Mother of a tiny ant and of the mighty elephant is different although the potentiality of the life-principle functioning in both is much alike. The laws of birth, growth and decay are similar and the operative unfolding of all the life-processes also follows a similar norm. The divine ordinance is that the Mother completely reproduces herself in the babe and thus the species or the race is perpetuated. The same may be said of Aditi as Universal Mother of all creatures in the past, present and future. She is identified with *Vāk* and symbolised as a Cow. It is said that Brahma in his unmanifest form is coeval and co-extensive with *Vāk* (*Yāvad Brahma vishṭhitaṁ tāvatī Vāk*, RV. 10. 114. 8).

The Mother Cow fondly calls the mouth of the Calf to her udder for drinking the milk that she yields. The Cow's udder in which she secretes and stores milk is here called *gharma* of which the symbolical meaning has been explained under Mantra 26.

The word *māyu* is translated by Sāyaṇa as *śabda*, and *mimāti māyum* may there fore be onomatopoeaic of the lowing of the Cow; but thinking of the root *mā* to *measure*, the word *māyu* may also signify a settlement that was 'measured out', namely, a village or any centre of population. In this particular sense, the word *māyu* has survived in many place-names ending in '*mau*' as Phapamau, Bangarmau, etc., distributed from the north-west upto Indonesia. Vedic *Māyu* has changed to colloquial '*mau*'. The measuring out of a village or a town and of a prāṇic system as is done by the Mother are tasks of the same category, with the difference that in the latter it is the Life-principle or consciousness or Prāṇa which enters as an essential element and governs the entire plan both in depth and in spatial and temporal extensions. The Ṛishi intends to state that just as *Purusha Prajāpati* transforms himself as the cosmic *Yajña Purusha*, so has the Great Mother Cow taken birth as the Cosmic Cow. The doctrine of the Calf or the Babe (*Vatsa Vidyā* or *Kumāra Vidyā*) has significant symbolical formulation, as found both in the Ṛig Veda and the Brāhmaṇas and the Purāṇas.

MANTRA 29

अयं स शिङ्क्ते येन गौरभीवृता मिमाति मायुं ध्वसनावधि श्रिता ।
सा चित्तिभिर्नि हि चकार मर्त्यं विद्युद् भवन्ती प्रति वव्रिमौहत ॥

—ऋ० वे० १।१६४।२९॥

He who had encompassed the Cow sneezes to expel her ; the Cow gently lows from her station in the clouds.

She has created the mortal by the power of her mind. Shining as lightning she has lifted the veil (*vavri*).[29]

There are several arguments here; viz. (1) what is the meaning of snorting or better, sneezing, in this context of the Cow ?

(2) Who is implied by the one who encompasses the Cow ?

(3) What is the meaning of *dhvasani* ?

(4) What is the significance of the shrilling cries of the Cow (*chitti*) and of the humbling of the mortal man by the Cow ?

(5) What is the idea of the Cow becoming a lightning (*vidhyut*) ?

(6) What is the meaning of the stripping off of the garment, of lifting the veil (*vavri*) ?

We should give thought to each one of these in order to arrive at the full meaning of the Mantra. Firstly the act of sneezing is a forceful expulsion of *prānic* air from inside the body through the two nostrils. It here stands as a symbol of the creative act from the body of the self-existent Creator. All kinds of functions that we witness in the human body must have existed in a universal source somewhere and all are valid to explain the creative process by which the cosmos was produced. The Ṛishis for this reason accepted a wide terminology which has

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[29] *Griffith*—He also snorts, by whom encompassed round the Cow lows as she clings unto the shedder of the rain.

She with her shrilling cries hath humbled mortal man, and, turned to lightning, hath stripped off her covering robe.

Wlsion—He, too, bellows, and the cow utters inarticulate sounds, as, encompassed by him, she repairs to her stall; (influenced) by her instincts, she acts like a human being, and, radiant, manifests her nature.

been woven in the Mantras, e.g. it is valid to speak of the creative act as *mimāna* (measuring out, 10. 121. 5), *samindhana* (enkindling), *jāgaraṇa* (waking), *rochana* (flashing), *prāṇana* (spiration, 10. 189. 2), *charaṇa* (striding), *skambhana* (supporting), *vīraṇa* (propelling, 6.69.8), *savana* (impelling), *īkshaṇa* (vision), *yojana* (yoking), *manthana* (churning), *āvartana* (turning round), *vivartana* (turning aside), *parāvartana* (turning back), *pravartana* (turning forward), *krandana* (roaring), *vitāna* (spreading out), *jāyamāna* (to be born), *vidyotana* (lightning), *yājana* (sacrificing), *saṅgamana* (mating), *āstaraṇa* (strewing), *ābharaṇa* (filling up), *stobhana* (piling up), *prajanana* (procreation), *ejana* (quivering), *vepana* (vibrating), *chetana* (stirring consciousness) *nartana* (dancing), *karaṇa* (doing), *vāhana* (carrying), *bhuvana* (becoming), *abhisvaraṇa* (choral singing), *grabhaṇa* (holding), *ārambhaṇa* (beginning, 10.81.2). *ādhāna* (germ-depositing), *vapana* (sowing of seed), *ksharaṇa* (oozing), *skandana* (jumping, 10. 17.11), *bhāsana* (shining), *manana* (thinking), *bṛiṁhaṇa* (growing), *poshaṇa* (sustaining), *pāyana* (suckling), *pāchana* (cooking, RV. 1. 164. 43), *iṅgana* (manifesting, 1. 164.45), *utpatana* (flying, 1.164.47), *jinvana* (activating, 1. 164. 61), *takshaṇa* (fashioning, 10.81.4), *sandhamana* (smelting, 10. 72. 2), *havana* (offering, 10.81.1), *dhāraṇa* (upholding, 10.121.1), *sthāpana* (stablishing, 10.120.7), *sṛijana* (making, 10.120.3), *kshayaṇa* (living, 10.120.8), *jṛimbhaṇa* (yawning), *vardhana* (increasing), *saṁvartana* (existing, 10.121.1), *janana* (producing, 10.121.7-9), *spardhana* (clashing in rivalry, 6.69.8), *utthāna* (getting up), *īraṇa* (inciting, 1.157.5), *bodhana* (waking, 1.157.1) *vikramaṇa* (stepping, 1.154.2), etc. This list may be extended still further, but reflects the vast canvass on which the creative activities in the cosmos and in the individual centre were visualised in manifold aspects.

So it is against this background that the action of sneezing (*śiṅghana*) which is a much stronger form of *niḥśvasita* has to be understood, namely when all causes had accumulated the cosmos was expelled from its centre by an irresistable force such as is experienced in the act of sneezing. Prajāpati could no longer check the Prāṇic force of manifestation, just as when the foetus is complete in the womb the mother delivers it by the force appearing as labour pains.

It was this phenomenon of *Āvirāviḥ*, which Prajāpati also experienced while he was delivered of the Universal Cow that existed in his womb. It was as irresistible expulsion of the *prāṇic* power as is present in the act of sneezing in but a very small measure. The next question is as to what was that which existed in the self-existent Centre of the Creator which was ejected by him. The answer is that the Cow was encompassed by him on all sides, namely, that she existed in his womb and was expelled out of his centre like the outbreath in snorting. This is in other words the same thing as the motif of Prajāpati giving birth to his own female

energy variously named as Śatarūpā, Sāvitrī, Sarasvatī with whom he falls in love. This daughter motiff is indispensable for the creative act. Prajāpati circumscribed in his own centre cannot create; alone in *Svayambhū* form he is called *vrittaujāḥ*, whose Ojas was turned on himself. Such is the state of the self-existent mathematical point without length, breadth and thickness, from which no circumference can be described. But, for the sake of dimensional creation, the absolute point is converted into a hypothetical centre from which we obtain the diameter and the periphery (*vishkambha* and its *maṇḍala*), the former as Ṛik and the latter as Sāma which are said to be the Two Steeds yoked to the car of Indra or *Madhya Prāṇā*.

The encompassing of the Universal Cow is a symbol of the two Universal Parents, viz. the Father-principle as *Svayambhū* and the Mother-principle as *Parameshṭhī*, the Bull and the Cow (*Vṛishabhaścha Dhenuḥ*, RV. 10.5.7), who are like two inverted Bowls uniting to form a common womb (*uttānayośchamvor yonirantaratrā pitā duhiturgarbhamādhāt*, RV. 1.164.33). This panoramic view of the two universal Parents is visible to all as the heavens and the earth (*dyaur me pitā janitā nābhiratra bandhurme mātā prithivi mahīyam*, RV. 1.164.33). This Mother Cow is the same as *Mahad Yoni*, also called *Mahad Brahma, Avyakta Prakṛiti* of later philosophy. She is Aditi, the Divine Mother, *Deva-Mātā*, whose sons are the Ādityas or universal Prānic Powers. It is her function to measure out the cosmos from her station in the mystic clouds prior to the formation of created forms.

The statement that she measures out the measurable worlds (*mimāti māyum*) has been explained under the previous Mantra, and both the meanings of the root *mā*, viz. to bellow and to measure, are equally applicable, since in the cosmogonical conception *Vāk* is co-extensive with the universe (*yāvad Brahma vishṭhitaṁ, tāvatī Vāk*, RV. 10.114.8). Vāk is the same as the *Pañcha-Bhūtas*, a symbol par excellence of *ākāśa*, which is the most subtle of the five elements, and therefore, a perfect exemplar of all the five. *Vāk* is the symbol of Motherhood, since there can be no creation without *Vāk* being energised by the divine Creator, who creates consciousness in Matter. There is a Cow tied to each Tree of Life lowing (*vṛikshe vṛikshe niyatā mīmayad gauḥ*, 10.27.22). The Cow is the Mother and Mother is Nature herself. In all the infinite glory that is in the universe her power is supreme and her splendour divine. She measures out the cosmos as she wills. Her Śakti is becoming these worlds. The Ṛishis adopted the symbolism of the universal Cow and of her numerous daughters to typify the principle of Motherhood as existing eternally and also manifesting in each mother bearing the potentiality of womb within her (RV.1.164.9, *atishṭhad garbho vṛijanīshvantaḥ*).

Next it is said that the Cow is stationed in the clouds (*dhvasani*). The imagery is that the Cow from her station in heaven is lowing in the form of thunder

and flashing as lightning. Sāyaṇa translates *dhvasani* as a cow-pen (*gavāṁ nivāsāśraya*) and also as clouds (*dhvasane meghe*). One need not quarrel over these meanings. How the Ṛishi's mind was working out the imagery of the Cow against a cosmological background may be understood as follows :

There is a Cow in everyone of the five modalities of *Svayaṁbhū, Parameshṭhī, Sūrya, Chandra* and *Pṛithivī*. The Cow of the earth is known as *Iḍā*, of Chandra as *Subrahmaṇyā* or *Bhoga*, of Sūrya as *Gau*, of Parameshṭhī as *Virāj* (also *Parameshṭhinī*), of *Svayambhū* as *Svayambhuvī Satyā* or *Vedamayī Nityā Vāk*. Thus the Cow principle is present at every level. Here there is a reference to the Cow in Parameshṭhī known as *Virāj*. Parameshṭhī is the same as the Ocean of Ṛita, the region of Waters, or clouds (*dhvasani*) from where her immortal station, She projects her powers into the mortal sphere of *Dyāvā-Pṛithivī*. The region of Parameshṭhī is known as *Purīshin*, Watery (1.164.12) and also as *Vīrāj* or *Goshṭhāna* a cow-pen. Thus Sāyaṇa is right in giving the two meanings of cloud and cow-pen to the word *dhvasani*. He also points out on the authority of Śākapūṇi, an ancient Nirukta writer, that the Cow intended here is *Mādhyamikā Vāk*. We are aware with the four-footed Cow in the form of Vāk (*chatvāri vāk parimitā padāni*, RV. 1. 164.45), three of them hidden in the Cave and the fourth uttered as the speech from the human throat. Later literature names these four forms of *Vāk* as *Parā, Paśyantī, Madhyamā* and *Vaikharī*. Parā Vāk is the same as *Sahasrākshharā*, which exists in *Parame Vyoman* that is *Svayambhū*; *Paśyantī* in the next stage is the *Vāk* of *Parameshṭhī* The third foot of Vāk is *Madhyamā ni Sūrya* named as being intermediate between *Paśyantī* and *Vaikharī*. The fourth kind of *Vāk* is the manifest Word, uttered by the speech and experienced by the ear. Thus the lowing of the Cow in the cow-pen has reference to the *Madhyamā Vāk*, which exists in of Sūrya or makes herself visible as a flash of lightning (*Vidyud bhavantī*), when she strips off her covering garments.

The next statement about the cow is that she is possessed of the quality of *Chitti*, the principle of *Chitta* or *Manas*, of which the seed is desire, *Kāma*, and by that she produces the mortal man; that is, Life in Matter. The universal Cow in *Parameshṭī* as *Virāj* is the eternal Life-principle, changeless and fixed, which is not agitated by any external activity. But the great Mother incarnates in her youthful daughters endowed with the principle of Mind (*yuvatir manīshā*, RV. 5.47.1). Griffith translates *chitti* as lowing, Sāyaṇa as *jñāna*, and Atmānanda as thinking (*chintana*). All three are admissible, since it is essentially the principle of Mind which manifests in the Cow for the sake of the material creation. It is the same as consciousness, *Chetanā* or *Chiti*, which becomes evident through Speech or sound, *Vāk*. The capacity to produce *Vāk* is proof of the presence of consciousness on

the level of the *Pancha Bhūtas*. So it is the principle of *chitti*, or the mental stirrings of the Cow or *Vāk* that bring into existence the world of mortal men.

The Cow stationed in the clouds of Parameshṭhī or the universal unmanifest source becomes manifest as a flash of lightning. *Vavri* is a veil or covering. The state of darkness preceding the creation of Sūrya is known as *Tamas*. The *Nāsadīya Sūkta* mentions two kinds of Darkness (*Tama āsīt tamasā gūḍhamagre*, RV. 10.129.3), when the primeval flood concealed in its depths all these worlds (*apraketaṁ salilaṁ sarvamā idam*). These two principles of Darkness are the universal Parents, Father and Mother, Svayambhū and Parameshṭhī, Agni and Soma. It is essential that this Veil should be cast aside (*prati vavrimauhata*) and the energy of the two Parents concealed, as the foetus in the womb, should become visible like a lightning flash i. e. Sūrya. Each new born Babe representing the descent of *Prāṇa* in *Bhūta* or the Life-principle in Matter is a lightning flash, *Vidyut*, which is also the symbol of Mother as the Cloud is that of the Father, the two together producing rain or lightning which is like the Babe.

Vidyut may be identified with *Urvaśī* and also *Ghṛitāchī* and other nymphs born of Waters and fecundated by the power of the Devas. Purūravas says about Urvaśī : "She who flashed brilliant as the falling lightning brought me delicious present from the waters. Now from the flood be born a strong young Hero. May Urvaśī prolong her life for ever" (RV. 10.95.10). In the Vasishṭha Sūkta also we find the same imagery of *Vidyut* applied to Urvaśi : "a form of lustre springing from the lightning wast thou (*vidyuto jyotiḥ*) when Varuṇa and Mitra saw thee" (RV. 7.33.10).

The Cow as lightning (*Vidyut*) or Urvaśī as lightning refer to an identical principle, namely *Rochanā* or the Great Light of *prāṇa* and *apāna*, flashing in each centre of Life (cf. *antaścharati rochanāśya prāṇādapānatī*, RV. 10.189.2). This light (*Vidyut*) is the same as Prāṇa, Sūrya, Agni, the light that was in heaven and on sea. When that light flashes from out of the dark clouds she announces her existence as the Mother that is creating the Rain; when she comes out of her covering, she takes the form of the individual mother in whom the Life-principle incarnates as the Babe or Kumāra. Unless Urvaśī strips off her covering Purūravas also remains concealed. It was her lightning flash that exposed Purūravas.

The principle of *Vavri* is the same as that of *Āvaraṇa* referred to as *āvarīvaḥ* in the Nāsadīya Sūkta.

Manifestation of Life implies release from a hidden source or Cave in which it remains concealed (cf. *vidmā te nāma paramaṁ guhā yat,* RV. 10.45.2; *guhā charantaṁ guhā babhūva*, RV. 3.1.9) and its illumining another mesaured container which whatever its form is comparable to the human body.

MANTRA 30

अनच्छये तुरगातु जीवमेजद् ध्रुवं मध्य आ पस्त्यानाम् ।
जीवो मृतस्य चरति स्वधाभिरमर्त्यो मर्त्येना सयोनिः ॥

—ऋ० वे० १।१६४।३०॥

That which has breath and speed and life lies firmly established in the midst of the Homes.

The Living (*Jīva*) moves by the offerings to the Dead (*mṛitaśarīra*). The immortal and the mortal have a common womb.[30]

This Mantra gives us the characteristic features of Life (*Jīva*), the word used here in its technical sense.

Three features of *Jīva* are mentioned as follows :

(1) *Anat*—same as breathing, from the root *an prāṇane*; it is clearly the principle of Prāṇa, expressing itself as Prāṇa and Apāna (*Prāṇādapānatī*, RV. 10.189.2) or contraction and expansion, *samañchana-prasāraṇa*, which is the true nature of the rhythm of Life.

(2) *Turagātu*—fast moving, having activity; this refers to the physical body.

(3) *Ejat*—it refers to the stirrings of the mind, the impelling force that is in each life-centre.

These are the three signs of animate life. In Mantra 4, they are named as *Asu*, *Asṛik* and *Ātmā* respectively, the three corresponding to Life, Matter and Mind, as explained in the commentary. In the case of the Sacrificial Horse of Aśvamedha, these three principles are described as *Nishadana*, *Nikramaṇa* and *Vivartana* as follows :

(1) *Nishadana*—resting or sitting, which has reference to the physical body, *Bhūta*; same as *Asṛik* (blood) or *turagātu* (speed).

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[30]*Griffith*—That which hath breath and speed and life and motion lies firmly established in the midst of their houses.

Living by offerings to the Dead he moveth, Immortal One, the brother of the mortal.

Wilson—Life endowed with breath and, eager (in discharge of its functions), reposes, steady, in the midst of its (proper) abodes : the life of the mortal body, cognate with the mortal frame, endures immortal, (sustained) by (obsequial) offerings.

(2) *Nikramaṇa*—coming in and going out, a feature of Prāṇa which appears and disappears : corresponding to *Asu* and *Anat*.

(3) *Vivartana*—rolling this side and that; this has refeence to the nature of Mind and its twofold activity as *Saṁkalpa* and *Vikalpa*. This corresponds to *Ātmā* of Mantra 4 and *Ejat* of Mantra 30.

Life-principle (*Jīva*) is said to be firmly established in the midst of houses. The symbolism is clear, namely that each body is a home in which Agni has its stable seat (*madhye pastyānāṁ dhruvam*).

The next two statements are very explicit and of the highest value for an insight into Vedic metaphysical thought. It is stated that the immortal and the mortal are kins born from the same womb, and secondly that the (immortal) Jīva moves with the mortal body by virtue of its intrinsic powers (*svadhābhiḥ*)

What is to be specially noted is the doctrine of *Sayonitā*, a common womb or origin which is also known as *Samāna-Yonitā* or *Eka-Yonitā*. The Mbh. refers to Agni and Soma as born from the same womb or *Eka-Yoni* (*agnīshomau kathaṁ pūrvam ekayonī pravartitau*, Śānti Parva, 3.29.1). They are like two inverted Bowls as described in Mantra 33.

Sāyaṇa is right and direct in explaining *martya* as *śarīra* and *amartya* as *Jīva*, the individual soul. The word *Svadhā*, however, is taken as the offerings given to the manes, but the word here has the same significance as in Nāsadiya Sūkta (RV. 10.129.5), where *Svadhā* refers to the lower principle of Matter and *Prayati* to the higher one of *Prāṇa*. The idea is that *Jiva* accepts the various powers of the mortal *śarira* and moves by its *prāṇic* and psychical powers.

This doctrine of *Svadhā* linking the immortal and the mortal will be referred to again in Mantra 38. VS. 28.53 mentions Agni as seated in a stable home (*mahān sadhasthe dhruva ā nishatto namaste astu*). It is repeating the same idea as found here.

Mantras 30 and 31 together formulate the ancient Vedic doctrine known as *Amṛita-Mṛityu Vāda* which is mentioned in the Nāsadīya Sūkta as one of the several metaphysical approaches to the problems of cosmogony (RV. 10.129.2). *Deva* is *Amṛita* and *Bhūta* is *Mṛityu*. The two are juxtaposed or exist together at every level and are in constant tension. Sūrya representing the manifested cosmos is the midpoint where both *Amṛit* and *Mṛityu* meet, therefore it is called *Mārtāṇḍa*, the Golden Germ produced by Mother Aditi from the dead egg. As stated in Śatapatha that which is on this side of Sūrya, i. e. the manifested cosmos is Mṛityu and that which is beyond Sūrya is the Death-conquering Region or Modality of *Amṛitam* (*yatkiñchārvāchīnam ādityāt sarvaṁ tan mṛityunāptam...atha ya enam ata ūrdvaṁ*

chinute, sa punarapamṛityuṁ jayati, ŚB. 10.5.1.4). In the womb of *Mṛityu*, i.e. Death, Matter or Visible Creation lies *Amṛitam*, the principle of Immortality or Prāṇa (*antaraṁ mrityoḥ Amṛitam*, ŚB. 10.5.2.4). *Amṛita* and *Mṛityu* are the twin principles by which Prajāpati created these worlds.

Having stated the mutual relationship of *Amartya* and *Martya*, the Ṛishi thinks of the great Principle which is beyond Death, *anipadyamāna*, and which is the great Cowherd (*Gopā*) in charge of the Universal Cow of creation, and secondly, how the great transcendent and Immortal Being subjects himself to the cyclic movement of the pendulum by which he succumbs to the principle of Death or incarnates in Matter. The two arguments are taken up in the following Mantra.



MANTRA 31

अपश्यं गोपामनिपद्यमानमा च परा च पथिभिश्चरन्तम् ।
स सध्रीचीः स विषूचीर्वसान आ वरीवर्ति भुवनेष्वन्तः ॥

—ऋ० वे० १।१६४।३१॥

I saw the Cowherd who never stumbles, coming hither and going afar by destined pathways.

He travelling along the cardinal and intermediate points continously travels these worlds.[31]

This is an important Mantra stating how the vast cosmic manifestation comprised of millions of universes is symbolised as the one Cow-Virāj, the Universal Mother or Infinity and how she is incarnating in the form of innumerable cows or mothers each producing a separate world-system and how all of them are under the care of One Cow-herd, *Gopā*. The Majesty of the Cowherd is that whatever may happen to the life-cycle of the cows, the Cowherd is eternal, immortal, undecaying, never dislodged from the central fixity in which he abides or on which he stands; the Ṛishi has a vision of this supreme Cowherd. If the Cow be taken as the symbol of *Gati* or motion, each motion gets exhausted and succumbs into nothingness. But the principle of Rest is inexhaustible and the source of all motion; it remains unmodified and enshrined in an eternal abode which is non-dimensional and beyond space and time. Whereas the cosmic wheel revolves, the centre (*amṛitasya nābhiḥ*) shines in its own splendour of permanent Rest or *Samādhi* with introvert *Ojas* and a gaze turned on its own self. Such is the majesty of the Cowherd, *Gopā*, invoked in this Mantra. All the rays of Sūrya are the fleet Cows with manifold horns or ramifications; all the individual centres of Motherhood scattered amongst men, animals and plants, all the formulations of *Vāk* in uttered syllables and in depth of silence, all the creative vibrations symbolised by Mother Earth

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[31]*Griffith*—I saw the herdsman, him who never stumbles, approaching by his pathways and departing.

He, clothed with gathered and diffusive splendour, within the worlds continually travels.

Wilson—I have beheld the unwearied protector of the universe, the sun, travelling upwards and downwards by various paths : invested with aggregative and diffusive radiance, he revolves in the midst of the regions.

and by the Great Mother, *Mahī Mātā* of the Universe are conceived of as *Vaiśvadevī Gauḥ*, the Cosmic Cow in whose body all the divine and earthly powers (*divya pārthiva indriya*) have their existence. Such a Cow stands in need of her Bull, *Vṛishabha* (*Vṛishabhaścha Dhenu*, RV. 10.5.7). Who is this Bull that sires the Cow, and who is the Cowherd that stands guard over them ? The answer is given with rare frankness in the Brāhmaṇas :

(1) Sūrya is the Gopā, Cowherd who takes care of or guards all these worlds (*esha vai Gopā ya esha Sūryastapati, esha hīdaṁ sarvaṁ gopāyati*, ŚB. 14.1.4.9);

(2) Agni is the Divine Cowherd (*Agnirvai devānāṁ Gopāḥ*, AB. 1.28);

(3) Indra is the Cowherd (*Indro vai Gopāḥ*, AB. 6.10; GB. 2.2.20);

Indra is also mentioned as the Most Excellent of all the Cowherds (RV. 1. 86.1, *sa sugopātamo janaḥ*).

(4) Prāṇa, the eternal Life-principle, is the Cowherd (*Prāṇo vai Gopāḥ, sa hīdam anipadyamāno gopāyati*, JUB. 3.37.2).

Thus we have a complete statement of the Gopā-doctrine of the Ṛig Veda. Its essence is that the principle of Immortality is the real Gopā which protects and takes care of all the Cows manifesting in whatever form on the plane of Matter whether in the cosmos or in the individual as explained above. As Śaunaka says, Agni on earth, Indra and Vāyu in Antariksha, and Āditya in heaven, these are the three forms of the same immortal principle. (Bṛi. Dev. 1.69—*agnirasminnathendrastu madhyato vāyureva cha, Sūryo divīti vijñeyāstisra eveha devatāḥ*). Essentially that principle is Agni or Prāṇa which was the first-born of the primeval order and himself became the Bull-Cow, or the composite universal Parent (*Agnirhi naḥ prathamajā ṛitasya pūrva āyuni vṛishabhaścha dhenuḥ*; 'Not-Being (*Asat*), Being (*Sat*) in the highest heaven, in Aditi's bosom and in Daksha's Birth-place. is Agni, our First-born of Holy Order, the Milch-Cow and the Bull in life's beginning'.

As Griffith has observed, Agni is identified with the first cause and first effect who is the one Prajāpati as yet an undeveloped embryo and at the same time both male and female. As the great Cowherd, Agni is the Master of the two principles of *Dynamis* and *Énergeia*.

The remaining three feet of the stanza make a three-fold statement about the movement of the Cowherd and, by implication, of his cows also. The basic idea is to bring out the principle of Rhythm or *Chhandas* which is at the root of creation and of each Yajña whether in the universe or in the individual. There is not a single manifest point where the law of *Chhandas* is not operative. As stated in the Bhāgavata, Nārāyaṇa Vishṇu rides on Garuḍa which is the same as *Chhandas* (*chhandomayena*

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Garuḍena samuhyamānaḥ, Bhāgavata, 8.3.31). One Agni is measured out as three in order to evolve its rhythm (*ekastredhā vihito jātavedāḥ,* AV. 18.4.11; *ekaṁ hi sa tat tredhābhavat,* AB. 3.28).

The very idea of contrasted duality as *Asat* and *Sat*, *Amṛita* and *Mṛityu*, *Rātri* and *Ahaḥ*, *Apāna* and *Prāṇa*, *Amanas* and *Manas*, *Kṛishṇa* and *Śukla*, *Yoshā* and *Vṛishā*, and a number of other opposite or conjoint principles is due to the rhythmic pattern of the cosmos as conceived by the Creator in his own person. This rhythm in its triple form is mentioned in the Mantra. The first is on the plane of the Mind, implied in *Ācharantam* and *Parācharantam*, by pathways which are the three courses in which the triune creation has been planned. Each path is the same as a foot-step of which there are three as in the motif of the three strides of Vishṇu. The transcendent Cowherd manifests himself on the plane of the Mind by once releasing his powers and then withdrawing them along the three-fold courses or in the three-fold regions, or on the threefold levels in which the creation is planned. Pūshan, master of the pathways is the Great Cowherd.

The second movement is on the level of Prāṇa mentioned as the movement of the Cowherd along the cardinal (*sadhrīchīḥ*) and the intermediate (*vishūchīḥ*) points of the compass or the cosmic *Svastika*. This two-fold rhythm of coming and going, *eti cha preti cha*, of contraction and expansion, *samañchana and prasāraṇa*, is inherent in the whole human machine and constitutes its basic tension or dynamism which makes the Life-principle function in the body. Energy is being diffused and then collected; this is the law by which the respiratory, circulatory, excretory and all other systems are working like a wheel.

As the Cowherd moves out with his cows in the morning and as he returns with them in the evening, so does the transcendent Prāṇa incarnate in Matter to create the Day and then withdraws itself to create the Night. Light and Darkness correspond to the principles of *Amṛitam* and *Mṛityu*, both of which Agni, Indra, Āditya and Prāṇa have accepted as the law of their energised and latent form. The last line states that the Cowherd continually travels within these worlds. This is with reference to each physical system or life on the plane of the Bhūtas, each of which is a *Bhuvana*, a Becoming or a world in itself.

Sāyaṇa very rightly explains *Gopā* as Āditya on the authority of his own Brāhmaṇa, viz. Aitareya, and also of the Taittirīya. Ātmānanda interprets *Gopā* as *Jīva* and also *Paramātmā*.

MANTRA 32

य ईं चकार न सो अस्य वेद य ईं ददर्श हिरुगिन्नु तस्मात्।
स मातुर्योना परिवीतो अन्तर्बहुप्रजा निर्ऋतिमा विवेश ॥

—ऋ०वे० १।१६४।३२॥

He who has made this Cosmos does not comprehend it. From him who saw this the creation is hidden.

He enveloped in his Mother's Womb, source of prolific life, has entered the Region of *Nirṛiti* (motherhood or mortal matter).[32]

The next five Mantras concentrate on the Father-principle and the Mother-principle and on the mysterious Seed of Life which is so prolific (*bahuprajāḥ*). The poet takes recourse to a number of imageries which are found elsewhere in the Ṛig Veda as explaining the law by which creation is brought into existence, being the supreme mystery which one sees, but one does not know. The Ṛishi is bold enough to declare that the Creator himself who has made all this does not know, what to speak of the individual self who is witnessing and taking part in this puppet-show ?

This is more or less in the same spirit as in the Nāsadīya Sūkta–'Who verily knows ? Who hath declared it (*Ko addhā veda ka iha pra vochat* RV. 10.129.6) ? The poet goes even further and expresses doubt if the creator who has made all this knows the mystery (*ya īṁ chakāra na so asya veda*; *cf. yo'syādhyakshaḥ parame vyomant so aṅga veda yadi vā na veda*, RV. 10.129.7).

The second quarter of the Mantra refers to the individual soul who is a witness of this cosmic working but from whom surely the secret is hidden (*biruk*). The whole creation was concealed in the womb of the Mother, *māturyonā parivīto antaḥ*. The greatest mystery is the principle of Motherhood. In the womb of the Mother, the body is created cell by cell from the zygote to the foetus and still we do

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[32]*Griffith*—He who hath made him doth not comprehend him : from him who saw him surely is he hidden.

He, yet enveloped in his Mother's bosom, source of much life, hath sunk into destruction.

Wilson—He who has made (this state of things) does not comprehend it : he who has beheld it, has it also verily hidden(from him) : he, whilst yet enveloped in his mother's womb, is subject to many births and has entered upon evil.

not know where Life comes from and where it departs. *Mātā* and *Yoni* refer to an identical principle, namely, unmanifested Nature, the Mother of the Universe.

Mātā is symbolised as the earth, not only the limited Earth of ours but the vastest Earth or the Primeval Mother of millions and billions of universes. The earth under our feet is just a symbol showing an identical principle existing at all levels and in all forms of creation. Therefore, it is frequently styled as Aditi (*iyaṁ vai pṛithivyaditiḥ*, ŚB. 2.2.1.19), as Gāyatrī (*iyaṁ pṛithivī vai Gāyatrī*, TB. 7.3.11.14, ŚB. 4.3.4.9), as *Vedī* (ŚB. 7.3.1.15), as the spotted-cow, *Vaśā pṛiśniḥ* (ŚB. 1.8.3.15), as the Goddess for worshipping the Devas (*devī deva-yajanī*, ŚB. 3.2.2.20); as the abode of all the Gods (*sarveshāṁ devānāṁ āyatanam*, ŚB. 14.3.2.4); as the symbol of Vāk (*iyaṁ pṛithivī vai Vāk*, ŚB. 4.6.9.16); as the universal Loka (*iyaṁ vai Virāṭ*, ŚB. 12. 6.1.40);as the foundation of all (*pratishṭhā*, AB. 8.1, ŚB. 2.2.1.19); as the divine chariot (*devaratha*, Tāṇḍya, 7.7.14); and many other concepts all of which are synthesised in the statement that the Earth is the Great Mother—*Mahī Mātā Pṛithivī*, TB. 2.4.6.8, ŚB. 13.1.6.1 and above all as Aditi, the Mother of Agni and Vishṇu, ŚB. 6.5.1.11, *sā aditir agniṁ garbhe bibharti*; *iyaṁ pṛithivī vā aditir mahī*, ŚB. 6.5.1.10. The identity of the Earth and the Cow and the principle of Motherhood is explicitly stated as the bedrock of Vedic symbolism (*dhenuriva vā iyaṁ* (*pṛithivī*), *manushyebhyaḥ sarvān kāmān duhe, mātā dhenur māteva vā iyaṁ pṛithivī, manushyān bibharti*, ŚB. 2.2.1.21).

The earth is also symbolised as *Nirṛiti* (*iyaṁ pṛithivī vai nirṛitiḥ*, ŚB. 7.2.1.11); for it gives back him who enters her. The prolific life-principle (*bahuprajāḥ*) justifies itself by entering the womb of the Mother. The original Prāṇa was the 'source of much life', as Griffith beautifully translates '*bahu–prajāḥ*'; the Infinite number of creatures being created by the power of Praṇa is surely due to the potency of the Mother's womb. Therefore, in the beginning the Bull or the self-existent Father-principle who carried within his centre all the possibilities of creation created the *Mahat* or *Yoni* or the Mother in whom he deposited his germ or in other words, entered, to be renovated in each birth as the Recurrent Babe (*navo navo bhavati jāyamānaḥ*, RV. 10.85.19).

The second meaning of *Nirṛiti* is the goddess of death and destruction. The tacit reference is to the legend of Daksha who was the father of a thousand sons and sixty daughters who became the mothers of all categories of life amongst gods, men, animals and plants, even rivers and mountains, as graphically described in the Purāṇas (See my 'Matsya Purāṇa—A Study', pp. 59-60). This Daksha is the genius of Yajña; his sacrifice is doomed unless he is revitalised by the unborn universal Mother, Satī and her husband, Śiva. Daksha is Yajña

in the individual centre which cannot become complete unless it is joined to its immortal source in the universal; therefore, as the story says, his head which was full with ego was severed by the divine energy of Śiva and it was replaced by the head of a Goat, *Aja*, which also as described in Mantra 6 of this Sūkta, signifies the Unborn Creator in his undifferentiated, unmanifest and immortal aspect.

Nirṛiti as Pṛithivī is also the same as Aditi; Aditi is described in the Ṛig-Veda as the mother of Daksha (*aditer Daksho ajāyata*, 10.72.4). This Aditi was the universal Mother who justifies the prolific seed of Daksha (*bahuprajāstva*, cf. also *suprajāstva*, RV. 10.62.3). Then Aditi becomes the youthful daughter of Daksha for creating life in each individual centre, who in a second birth as Pārvatī, typifying the female half of Śiva's body, gave birth to Skanda or Kumāra, an incarnation of Agni. This is the father-daughter or mother-son motif without which the biological chain in the procreative act would stop.

The epithet '*bahuprajāḥ*' is significant in another way. Who is this *bahuprajāḥ*, 'Source of much life', Father of innumerable sons ? The answer is that Prajāpati himself is *bahuprajāḥ*, Father of many sons. When he was alone he did not feel very happy, *ekākī na reme*, and so he created a Ghost out of himself named *Mahat*, or *Mahad bhūta* or *Mahad Yaksha* or *Mahad Yoni* or his universal aspect. This became his *Nirṛiti*, his mortal form or death. If there were no creation, Prajāpati, would remain self-centred with all his *Ojas* withdrawn unto himself, but in the act of creation, he invitedt rouble for himself, and became depleted of his energy. With immortality, the element of death also came into existence; with light came also darkness which in the Upanishads are spoken of as *ātapa* and *chhāyā* (*Chhāyātapau Brahmavido vadanti*).

With this background *Nirṛiti* is understood in Sanskrit literature as the genius of death and destruction, *Chāmuṇḍā*, *Alakshmī* or *Pāpa Lakshmī*, or the same as *Kṛityā* who, according to the Marriage Hymn of the Ṛig Veda, inheres in every Woman (RV. 10. 85.29). There is something somewhere, identified as the principle of Darkness and Evil, who becomes the Mother of all the Vṛitras and Asuras that exist in creation. They also have been created by Prajāpati and therefore, the cosmos is the composite form of both good and evil. The womb of the Mother which creates Life in Matter of the noblest quality also produces deepest Darkness of Mind and Soul. In Purāṇic legends it is said that Vīraka as the Lord of all the hosts of *Pramathas* and *Gaṇas*, i. e. distorted beings who deviate from the upright Brahma-Sūtra on the three planes of Mind, Life and Matter, is the son of the Great Mother, Pārvatī, Ambikā who is the left half of the Ardhanārīśvara Form of Śiva. It is implied that the right half portion is *Sthāṇu*, true to the Brahma-Sūtra and the left

half is in a constant flux in the form of the prankish life-forces, typified as the *Gaṇas* in the womb of the Mother. It is thus evident that both Puṇyā Lakshmī and Pāpā Lakshmī exist at every point of manifestation and are twin sisters. So as soon as Prajāpati became intent towards creativity he had to submit to the power of *Nirṛiti*. This word has justifiably a two-fold meaning; viz., the principle of Motherhood symbolised as Pṛithivī and the principle of *Bhūta* or *Yaksha*-hood which is the same as *Kṛityā* or Death and Destruction, referred to several times in the Ṛig Veda as *Pāpayāmuyā* (RV. 10.85.30,10.135.3). As *Yaksha* he takes the form of *Yakshmā* by which Prajāpati also suffered until he was relieved of the accursed malady by means of Yajña (RV. 10.85.31). *Nirṛiti* is personified Evil, *Pāpa* and Death, being later on personified as *Chāmuṇḍā*, *Pretavāhanā*, terrific and emaciated (*ghorā and śushkā*) who in cult elaboration became *Jāta-Haraṇī* (Plague to Children). Child (*Jāta*) is the same as *Bhūtasya Jātaḥ* (RV. 10.121.1), i. e. life manifested in Matter and the Evil in various personifications plagues the Babe who therefore, must be protected from her octopus grip by the power of the Devas. Prajāpati in creating the principle of Motherhood exposed himself to a lot of trouble, but that was inevitable. The Mahat stalked as the universal Āsuric principle for all the Devas (*Mahad devānām asuratvam ekam*, RV. 3.55.1). The Deva is not allowed to enjoy complacent rest but to girdle himself up for a trial of strength with the Asura who is always ready with his challenge, and finally the Deva has to vanquish and break him.

There is also here a reference to the doctrine of *Anupraveśa*. The Archetypal enters all the subsequent types or the primeval Father enters all the succeeding generations of sons and grandsons (RV. 10.81.1). Therefore, Prajāpati as *Bahuprajāḥ* himself entered (*āviveśa*) the womb of *Nirṛiti* or Motherhood (*Mahad Yoni*) creating and recreating in each generation a new act of Life, a complete image of his own self and each Prajā or creature is the visible symbol of that incarnation of Prajāpati.



MANTRA 33

द्यौर्मे पिता जनिता नाभिरत्र बन्धुर्मे माता पृथिवी महीयम् ।
उत्तानयोश्चम्वो३र्योनिरन्तरत्रा पिता दुहितुर्गर्भमाधात् ॥

—ऋ० वे० १।१६४।३३।।

Dyaus is my Father, my Begetter; his kinship is in me. This great Earth is my kin and mother.

Between the two recumbent Bowls is the Womb of the Two Parents. The Father deposited his germ in the Daughter in that Womb.[33]

Mantra 33 brings to a climax the Father-Mother doctrine introduced in the earlier Mantras. It states four things :

(1) Heaven is the Father;
(2) Earth is the Mother;
(3) The two are like Inverted Bowls forming a common Womb;
(4) The Father deposits the Germ in the Daughter.

These four elements must be present wherever new Life or Babe (*Garbha*) is to be produced.

Dyauḥ Pitā Pṛithivī Mātā is the Vedic Sūtra of the act of creation and procreation. The symbolism of heaven and earth which we have partly explained should be clearely understood once for all. There existed in the beginning the single Golden Egg which split into two, the one half as the Father and the second half as the Mother. This differentiation as the Male and the Female is the deepest unknown Mystery which started the creative chain of Life. The Universal Parents and the Individual Parents both are typified as *Dyāvā-Pṛithivī*. They are conceived of as the two foundations of creation (*Dyāvā pṛithivī vai pratishṭhe*, AB. 4. 10).

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[33]*Griffith*—Dyaus is my Father, my begetter : kinship is here. This great earth is my kin and Mother.

Between the wide-spread world-halves is the birth-place : the Father laid the Daughter's germ within it.

Wilson—The heaven is my parent and progenitor : the naval (of the earth) is my kinsman : the spacious earth is my mother. The womb (of all being) lies between the two uplifted ladles, and in it the parent has deposited the germ (of the fruitfulness) of the daughter.

They are also spoken of as *Rodasī* (*Dyāvā Pṛithivī rodasī*, VS. 11.43.12.107; ŚB. 6.4.4.2, 6.7.3.2, 7.3.1.30, AB. 2.41, JUB. 1.32.4). It is said that Prajāpati cried when he entered the Womb of these two Parents and therefore, they are described as *Rodasī* (*yad arodīt* (*Prajāpatiḥ*) *tad anayoḥ* (*Dyāvā-Pṛithivyoḥ*) *rodasītvam*. TB. 2.2.9.4). The same semantic etymology is offered for Rudra (*yadarodīt tasmād Rudraḥ*, ŚB. 6.1.3.10). Whether it is a reference to Agni as Prajāpati or Rudra, it is the same principle, viz., the Life-principle incarnating in Matter, and crying for food. This is the Law. As soon as the first fertilized Ovum starts on its embryonic career from the zygote to the foetus, the Life-cell has to be supplied with food and that is the meaning of the 'crying' (*Rodana*) of Prajāpati or Rudra, both of whom are the same as Agni or Prāṇāgni. The germ of Life growing in the cell determines its *Dyāvā-Pṛithivī* like the two shells of the mother of pearl, that is the *Rodasī Brahmāṇḍa* within which the child constantly cries for food, assimilates nourishment (*anna*) and develops to its full possibilities.

What is the meaning of the Child or the Babe in the Mother's Womb ? The answer is that it is the *Madhya Prāṇa* or the Central Life-force (*ayaṁ vāva śiśur*, *yoyaṁ madhyamaḥ Prāṇaḥ*, ŚB. 14.5.2.1).This child is the same as Kumāra (ŚB. 6.1.3.18-19; *Agniṁ Kumāram*) . When the Gods saw the Kumāra they said you are Rudra (*rudro'si*, ŚB. .6.1.3.10) and seeing the Babe crying the Gods said, 'let us propitiate him with food so that he may become quiet' (*annam asmai saṁbharāma, tenainaṁ śamayāmeti* (ŚB. 9.1.1.2). The Life-principle suffering from pangs of hunger (*aśanāyā*) is supplied with ration and becomes quiet for a time until it is hungry again and so the process continues through Life.

In the above explanation of the Brāhmaṇas, we get close to the meaning of *Rudra* and *Rodasī*. The region between Heaven and Earth or *Dyāvā-Pṛithivī* is the *Rodasī Jagat* of *Ardhanārīśvara Rudra*, and on this level no Life can be created either in plants, animals or men, except by the union of the Two Parents coming together. The Father and the Mother principles, as the phenomena of the anthers and the pistil, are visible in the world of Botany in flowers as the mysterious romance demonstrating the instinct of Love or *Kāma* which existed in the beginning as the Seed of Mind, *Kāmastadagre samavartatādhi Manaso retaḥ prathamaṁ yadāsīt*.

Everything that has been created has its respective *Dyāvā-Pṛithivī* Parents (*tadime dyāvā pṛithivī upāhvayate yayoridaṁ sarvam adhi*, ŚB. 1.8.1.29).

The question arises as to what is *Dyauḥ* and what is *Pṛithivī* and how is *Dyauḥ* Father and *Pṛithivī* Mother ? This is basic to the understanding of the doctrine of the Two Parents. For the sake of quick comprehension *Dyāvā-Pṛithivī* are symbolised as the sky and the earth, but there is a much deeper significance of

the two terms. Heaven (*Dyauḥ*) is the symbol not of the sky over our heads which in reality is nothing excepting blank space but of the principle of Immortality, Amṛitam, Divinity (*Deva*), Light (*Jyotiḥ*), and Truth (*Satyam*). As against this, Pṛithivī or the Earth has been treated as the convenient symbol of Matter (*Bhūta*), *Mṛityu* (darkness), and Asura, etc. On the biological plane heaven is conceived as the Father-principle and the earth as the Mother-principle. They are the Two Parents who exist in the unmanifested Universal as *Svayaṁbhū* and *Parameshṭhī* and in the manifested individual as Sūrya and Pṛithivī.

In speaking of *Dyauḥ* the Ṛishi gives three epithets : *Pitā*, with reference to the principle of Mind, *Janitā* to the principle of Prāṇa and *Bandhu* to that of *Pañcha-Bhūtas* or physical body. The last one is the same as *Sat*, and the first two *Asat*, and there is an inherent kinship between *Asat* and *Sat*. The Seers discovered with the power of their mind the relationship between the *Sat* and the *Asat* or the source of the former in the latter (*sato bandhum asati niravindan hṛidi pratīshyā kavayo manīshā*, RV. 10.129.4). The discovery of the Existent's kinship with the Non-Existent is the key to unlock the mystery. The *Asat* is the principle of *Prāṇa* (ŚB. 6.1.1.1) and *Sat* of Matter. The terms *Nābhi* and *Bandhu* are interrelated; the former used in ṛespect of relations on the Father's side and the latter on the Mother's side, but this cannot be insisted upon as both stand for joint kinship through the Father and the Mother. Our kinship on the one hand is with the immortal heaven, and on the other with the mortal Matter. The Earth is called *Mahī Mātā*, the Great Mother, or *Mahī Pṛithivī*, Cosmic Mother, the same as *Mahī Aditi*, (ŚB. 6.5.1.10), the Great Aditi, or *Viśvarūpā* Aditi (TB. 1.7.6.7).

The Earth and the Heaven are both described here as *Uttāna Chamū* which both Griffith and Wilson translate as 'uplifted ladles'. The real purport is that these are the two Bowls turned to each other and therefore forming a single cavity. The one is recumbent against the other, as is exactly the position of the Two Parents in the act of congress. In fact the Earth is called *Uttānā* or the Mother with her secretions turned to or awaiting for the Father (*iyaṁ pṛithivī vā uttānā aṅgirasaḥ*, TB. 2.3.2.5, 2.3.46), and so also Sūrya is called *uttānapād* (RV. 10.72.4) who gives birth to *Bhūmi*. When the recumbent Mother is fecundated by the Seed of the Father and when made prolific, straight does she give birth to the Steer (*uttānāyām avabharā chikitvān sadyaḥ pravītā vṛishaṇaṁ jajāna*, RV. 3.29.3). *Uttānā* literally means 'lying on the back with uplifted legs' and the word is still current in Hindi in the same sense. If we look from below the Mother looks recumbent to the Father (*pādamūla dṛishṭiḥ*), i. e. a view from the world of Matter. If we look from above, the Father is recumbent to the Mother (*Śiromūla dṛishṭiḥ*),

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a view from the principle of Prāṇa or Energy or Deva. The scientist accepts the former viewpoint and the philosopher the latter one.

Once the Golden Egg was fissioned by the power of the Creator into Male and Female principles, the *Mithuna* of Man and Woman again comes together for procreation. Their two opposite principles combine to form a single *Yoni* or Womb. The Mother alone with all her potentialities is incomplete and so is the Father. The two *Putrakṛit Yonis* must come together and this fact is clearly stated here, that Father Heaven and Mother Earth are facing each other as the two Bowls of Life.

The statement that the Father deposited the Seed in the Daughter is based on the basic symbolism that Prajāpati was alone in the beginning and it was his Female Energy that became the Mother. *Duhitā*, literally the one placed at a distance or outside, refers to the principle of Motherhood as manifesting in all females. The Centre (*Nābhi*) is the Father and the peripheral extension (*bandhu*) is the Mother. The word *Dūra* implied in the term *Duhitā*, as Yāska would explain it, does not signify so much spatial separation, although that also exists, but an evolution in depth of the cause manifesting as effect viz. the Source *ab intra* evolving *ab extra*. The spatial remoteness also is true. Prakṛiti with its boundless extension in space has been created by Purusha and is being charged with his energy at all points howsoever distant they may be. We have already explained the imagery of Brahmā and Śatarūpā or Brahmā and Sāvitrī, the latter conceived as the Daughter of the cosmic Father, but truly signifying Parkṛiti as the epithet Śatarūpa implies. The same principle of reciprocal generation is exemplified in the conception of Daksha and Aditi (RV. 10.72.4-5).

In reviewing these cosmogonical ordinances through humanised symbols it is futile to descend or lapse into categories of thought which are completely inadmissible in the spheres originally intended by the Mantra-writers. The Vedic Ṛishis have developed a wide symbolical language on the basis of the procreative act between the Male and the Female and it could be pursued in its completeness much further in a whole volume. For example, as stated in the Tāṇḍya, Prajāpati was alone. He created *Vāk* as his dual principle and copulated with her. She became prolific and created all beings and having done so, re-entered her source in Prajāpati (Tāṇḍya. 20.14.2). *Dyāvā-Pṛithivī* are identified with the two worlds of Heaven and Earth which are both fertilising each other (*imau vai lokāu retaḥsichau*) the world below sending its smoke which forms the clouds and the world above shedding rain which fertilises the earth (ŚB. 7.4.2.22). In the gross ritual of the sacrifice, the *Dyāvā-Pṛithivī* as a Pair-deity have their Puroḍāśa boiled in a single pan (*eka-kapāla puroḍāśa*, ŚB. 2.5.1.17).

MANTRA 34

पृच्छामि त्वा परमन्तं पृथिव्याः पृच्छामि यत्र भुवनस्य नाभिः ।
पृच्छामि त्वा वृष्णो अश्वस्य रेतः पृच्छामि वाचः परमं व्योम ॥

—ऋ० वे० १।१६४।३४॥

I ask about the Earth's farthest limit. I ask about the centre of the universe.
I ask about the Stallions' prolific Seed. I ask about the highest Heaven of *Vāk*.[34]

Mantras 34 and 35 are in the style of questions and answers, a true *Brahmodyam*. There are four questions in Mantra 34 to which specific answers are propounded in Mantra 35.

The first question relates to the farthest extent of the Earth. The answer is that the altar of the sacrifice is the farthest limit of Earth's extension.

The second question is about the centre (*nābhi*) of the universe. The answer is that the sacrifice is the centre of the universe.

The third question is about the seed of the Stallion Horse. The answer is that Soma is that Seed which fecundates the Mare or the principle of Motherhood.

The fourth question is about the highest Heaven or Empyrean of Speech, *Vāk*. The answer is that Brahmā, the Source of Vedic *Vāk* is that highest heaven.

These four questions and answers are framed in terms of a number of Vedic symbols like *Vedi*, *Paramanta*, *Bhuvana*, *Nābhi*, *Vṛishā Aśva*, *Retas*, *Vāk*, *Parama Vyoma*, *Yajña*, *Soma* and *Brahmā*. A correct appraisal of their meaning gives the secret of the Mantra.

Pṛithivī as we have explained above is the Mother. The Ṛishi is asking about the profundity of the Mother-principle as said in the Mbh (*Mātā gurutarā bhūmeḥ*;

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[34]*Griffith*—I ask thee of the earth's extremest limit; where is the centre of the world, I ask thee.

I ask thee of the Stallion's seed prolific, I ask of highest heaven where Speech abideth.

Wilson—I ask thee (Institutor of the rite), what is the uttermost end of the earth : I ask thee, where is the navel of the world. I ask thee, what is the fecundating power of the rain-shedding steed : I ask thee, what is the supreme heaven of (holy) speech.

Āraṇyaka-parva, 297-41; Mother is greater than the Earth). If we think in terms of spatial extension of the earth, the simple arithmetical answer may be given that the End of the Earth is its diameter of 8,000 miles and circumference of 25,000 miles, as modern science has ascertained, but that truly is a leading answer that takes us to the real symbolical significance of *Pṛithivī* and *Mātā*. *Mātā* is literally one who measures and the question is as to what is her measure. She is *Pramā*, the Archetypal Rod, the gauging Yard which is measuring all creatures and the cosmos. Therefore the question which naturally arises is as to the measure of the Measurer; the answer is germane to the whole argument underlying the doctrine of Father-Mother, or *Dyāvā Pṛithivī*. In simple words it is stated that the altar of the Yajña is the deepest measure or the farthest limit of Pṛthivī. The *Vedi* is the same as *Yoni* or *Mātā* which produces the child, that is *Agni* or *Kumāra*. Now there are no limits to the complex nature of manifested forces of both Spirit and Matter that incarnate in the form of the Babe. As we have said several times earlier, Agni is *Vāk* and *Vāk* is matter or the *Pañcha Bhūtas* ort he material body comprised of Life, Mind and Matter. All these three are infinite and therefore termed in the Veda as the Three Thousands, *Trisāhasrī*, explained as *Veda Sāhasrī* (principle of Mind), *Loka Sāhasrī* (principle of *Prāṇic* manifestation or *Rajas*), and *Vāk Sāhasrī* (the infinite principle of Matter or the *Bhūtas*). This threefold pattern of the world and of each individual and of Agni (*ekas tredhā vihitaḥ Jātavedāḥ*, AV 18.3.11). is that of three infinities which enter into each individual manifestation of the Life-principle known as *Prāṇāgni*. Therefore Agni is said to have had three Births and three Mothers. He is truly a son of Three Mothers, a *Tryambaka* God. The three-Mothers ultimately are but different forms of the single Great Mother and she is Mahat, Virāj, Aditi, or Yoni or Vedi, all symbolised as Pṛithivī. The utmost extension of Pṛithivī in the symbolical sense is the same as that of Prajāpati himself as stated in the Ṛig Veda (*yāvad Brahma vishṭhitaṁ tāvatī Vāk*, RV. 10. 114.8).

This differentiation of the Father-principle in the form of triple *Vāk* is unfolding itself in a thousandfold majesty (*sahasradhā mahimānaḥ sahasram*, RV. 10.114.8). All the divine and earthly powers of the cosmos and of the Creator are in the Mother's Womb, whether it is the womb of a tiny mosquito or of the mighty elephant. No Babe or incarnation of Agni as *Kumāra* can be produced unless all the energies that have their primeval source in Prajāpati, combine into the embryonic processing of the Life-principle. Therefore, the implication is that there is no measure of Boundless Nature or of Mother's Womb. She is Infinity herself. The Altar of the Yajña visibly dimensional has its root in the heart (*hṛiddeśa*), which because of its being the seat of the Divinity is unfathomable in depth. Who can

ever fully take the soundings of the Mind which is the symbol of Prajāpati himself. All the emotional depth with which the *Yajña* is performed becomes manifest in the *Vedi* in which the Fire is enkindled. The two seeds of the Father and the Mother which create the Babe fructify in the *Yoni* or the *Vedi*. Physically it may have a measure but on the plane of Mind and Life, it is beyond measure, a true *paramanta* or *parāvata*, the extremest point beyond which the diameter does not extend and which in Vedic terminology was known as *Ud-ṛich*.



MANTRA 35

इयं वेदिः परो अन्तः पृथिव्या अयं यज्ञो भुवनस्य नाभिः ।
अयं सोमो वृष्णो अश्वस्य रेतो ब्रह्मायं वाचः परमं व्योम ॥

—ऋ० वे० १।१६४।३५॥

This Altar (*Vedi*) is the farthest limit of *Vāk*. This *Yajña* is the Centre of the Universe.

Soma is the prolific Seed of the fecundating Horse. Brahmā priest is the highest heaven of *Vāk*.[35]

The next question relates to the centre of the world. Mathematically such a centre cannot be posed at any one point, since the dimensional space if real is boundless and beyond the computation of numbers. The question is not arithmetical at all. It is with respect to the hypothetical centre of the Personality, that is manifest in the Individual Self and that exists also in the Supreme Self. The answer that is given to this question specifically leads us to the thought of the Ṛishi. He is thinking of *Yajña* which is the form of *Purusha* (*Purusho vai Yajñaḥ*, ŚB. 1.3.2.1., 3.5.3.1; TB. 3.8.23.1; *yāvāneva purushastāvān* (*Yajñaḥ*) *vidhīyate tasmāt Purusho Yajñaḥ*, Ś.B. 1.3.2.1; *Yajñena vai Purushaḥ sammitaḥ*, TŚ. 5.2.5.1; *Purusha-sammito Yajñaḥ*, ŚB. 3.1.4.23) and of Prajāpati (*Purushaḥ Prajāpatiḥ*, ŚB. 6.2.1.23, 7.1.1.37, 7.4.1.15, 4.3.4.3). Prajāpati is infinite and measureless, symbolically expressed as the Thousand, *Sahasra*, and so is Purusha an image of the Thousandfold Prajāpati (*Purusho vai Sahasrasya pratimā*, ŚB. 7.5.2.17). *Yajña* signifies a creative act at all levels; on the biological plane it is the creation of new Life in Matter that is *Yajña*, a union of Agni and Soma; wherever there is such a creative process, there is the centre of the universe, the meaning being that the entire mystery or potentiality of the cosmic process becomes inherent in the centre of that *Yajña*. Therefore,

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[35] *Griffith*—This altar is the earth's extremest limit; this sacrifice of ours is the world's centre.

The Stallion's seed prolific is the Soma; this Brahman highest heaven where Speech abideth.

Wilson—This altar is the uttermost end of the earth : this sacrifice is the navel of the world : This Soma juice is the fecundating power of the rain-shedding Steed; this Brahma is the supreme heaven of (holy) speech.

whatever is created by *Yajña* is the true image of Prajāpati or all the Gods. This is the great Truth of Life, that it cannot be fragmented from its immortal source, although becoming manifest in Matter. All the divine powers in heaven and earth (*divya pārthiva indriya*, VS. 7.3), or each Life-centre is an off-shoot of divine Soma (*Devāṁśu*, VS. 7.3). After all, the individual Prāṇa is of the nature of Light of which the source is the supernal Sun, and therefore, the Devas who come to live in the body with *Madhya Prāṇa* or Indra (ŚB. 6.1.1.2) are called the Light-sipping Gods (*marīchipa deva*, VS. 7.2).

The essence of the Ṛig Vedic thought is the idea of *Yajña*, which is the completest invocation of the divine principle from whom the cosmos emanates and who as Prajāpati is the principle manifested as the cosmos.

The word *Nābhi* stands for the centre in Vedic symbolism. It is the same as *Hṛidaya* or *hṛiddeśa* of the Gitā which is the seat of the highest divine principle (*Īśvaraḥ sarvabhūtānāṁ hṛiddeśe' rjuna tishṭhati*, BG. 18.61). In fact it is essential that a *Nābhi* or *Hṛiddeśa* should come into existence to reflect the glory of the divine splendour and such a centre is created only as *Yajña*. There are two conceptions of the Father and the Mother whose union becomes a *Yajña*. The Father is like the centre (*Nābhi*) of the circle and the Mother the circumference (*Paramanta*).

The third question is about the Seed of the Stallion Horse. The creation of the Father and the Mother principle is not enough but they should justify themselves by the Seed created in the two *Yonis*, the union of which results in the birth of the Babe. The fecundating potency is symbolised as the Stallion Horse (*Vṛishā-Aśva*) whose Seed or creative germ is said to be the Soma. It is the single Soma which becomes both Man and Woman in its differentiated aspects, but is originally a single potency. The Father's Sperm and the Mother's Ovum are both but two forms of Soma (*reto vai Somaḥ*, ŚB. 1.9.2.1). The forms of *retas* or Soma may be different in the Two Parents, but they are essentially one and the same principle (*ubhayataḥ parigṛihītaṁ vai retaḥ prajāyate*, ŚB. 2.3.1.31). The Seed is the same as birth (*reto vai prajātiḥ*). The act of fecundation is a complete *Yajña* (*reto vā atra Yajñaḥ*, ŚB. 7.3.2.9). Both *Retas* and *Soma* whatever be their material form in the Male and the Female, are but two aspects of the same Life-principle (*Prāṇo vai Somaḥ*, ŚB. 7.3.1.45, *Prāṇo retaḥ*, AB. 2.38). The same Life-principle is processed in the Male Father as *Retas* and the Female Mother as Soma. The Horse is Prajāpati himself because of his prāṇic powers or movement which is the chief characteristic of the Horse from the root *aś* to go or to eat. Wherever there is Prāṇa, there is *Gati*, (Cf. *Prāṇo vai samañchana-prasāraṇam*, ŚB .8.1.4.10) and there is an essential need for food. *Gati* is Agni and Food is Soma, so that each prāṇic centre is functioning in a twofold manner. Both of them are the two aspects of the

Horse, who eats the fodder and moves. Prajāpati is in each Purusha or individual centre and his whole mystery produces the prolific Seed by which new Life is created, and that Seed as explained above is the Parental Germ called Soma which belongs to Prajāpati in his form of a Stallion (*Prājāpatyo vā aśvaḥ*, ŚB. 6.5.3.9). In fact Agni himself is the Horse or the fecundating Stallion in his aspect of *Ghraṁsa* or Fire. He is processed as Agni in the Father and as *Himā* or Soma in the Mother (*Agniresha yadaśvaḥ*, ŚB. 6.3.3.2; *tatraivāgnirādhatta himā ghraṁsaṁ cha*, AV. 1.1.46-48). Heat and Cold are relative aspects of the same Agni or Temperature and this basal dichotomy is manifesting itself at several levels and in several forms. It is this principle of the Father and the Mother symbolised as Horse and Mare, both in Indian and in Greek Mythology. In the legend of Sūrya, assuming the form of a Horse (*Asau vā Āditya Aśvaḥ*, TB. 3.9.23.2) and his female energy, *Saṁjña* becoming a Mare (RV. 10.17.1-2). This legend of Horse and Mare was known amongst the ancient Greeks also where Poseidon was the divine Horse, the wild gallopping Stallion named Hippios, which meant ' Horsey-one '. He fell in love with the Goddess of the Earth, but she in her fear changed heself into a Mare, thinking to escape, but the God turned himself into a Stallion, pursued and won her. In another version, the Goddess Demeter who changes herself into a Mare and was pursued by Poseidon in the guise of a Horse. Thus the mention of the Stallion Horse in the Mantra stands for both the Horse and the Mare or the two aspects of the single principle of fecundation.

The fourth question relates to the highest station of the principle of *Vāk*, The answer is given that the loftiest heaven of *Yāk*, i.e. its deepest source is Brahmā or Prajāpati in whom this Vāk existed as the Vedas or *Trayī Vidyā*. *Vāk* is the symbol of the universal Mother, Aditi or Prakṛiti, the Omniform Cow, *Viśvarūpā Gauḥ*. Sūrya or Cosmos is her Calf as explained above. Her ultimate source is Brahmā or Prajāpati himself. She is fourfooted (*Chatushpadī*; *Chatvāri vāk parimitā padāni*, RV. 1.164.45); and so is Prajāpati four-footed (*Chatushpād*) whose *Tripād* or immortal portion exists in the high heaven and the mortal one fourth here below in Matter.

In the ritual Brahmā is the highest Priest, the superintendant and silent witness of the sacrifice who does not participate in the triple functions of the Yajña and is therefore identified with the principle of Silence (*Tūshṇīm*). Thus there are two aspects of Vāk, namely that which is an attribute of the Material Ākāśa, i.e. the mortal speech, which is measured in terms of syllables, but the other *Vāk* is Thousand-syllabled, *Sahasrākshara*, which has its source in the highest Empyrean (*Sahasrākshara Parame Vyoman*, RV. 1.164.41) and this sublimest heaven is the same as Brahmā or Prajāpati himself, in his *anirukta*, *amūrta*, *aparimita* and *tūshṇīm* aspect.

MANTRA 36

सप्तार्धगर्भा भुवनस्य रेतो विष्णोस्तिष्ठन्ति प्रदिशा विधर्मणि ।
ते धीतिभिर्मनसा ते विपश्चितः परिभुवः परि भवन्ति विश्वतः॥

—ऋ० वे० १।१६४।३६॥

The Seed of the Universe consists of the Seven Sons of the Transcendent Half (*Ardha*). They maintain their functions by Vishṇu's Ordinance.

Endowed with wisdom through intelligence and thought, they, the omnipresent ones, encompass us on all sides.[36]

Griffith is frank enough to admit, 'this stanza, as Ludwig remarks, is one of the most unintelligible in the whole Veda'. As such, Griffith's translation of it also hardly makes any sense. In Mantra 35 the Ṛishi has mentioned the prolific Seed of the Horse and here he further examines the nature of that Seed which is designated as the Seed of the Universe, *Bhuvanasya Retaḥ*, and also of the power by which the Seed functions.

The keyword in the stanza is *Ardha*, which Griffith takes as 'unripened', but, which, in its true literal sense, means One-Half. As an extension of the *Parāvara* doctrine, or in truth as part of the doctrine of *Ekam*, the world is conceived of as One-Half (*Avarārdha*) and Brahman or Prajāpati as the Other-Half (*Parārdha*). This is stated in the AV. in the clearest terms (*Ardhena viśvaṁ bhuvanaṁ jajāna, yadasyārdhaṁ katamaḥ sa ketuḥ*, AV. 10.8.13, 11.4.22; *ardhena viśvaṁ bhuvanaṁ jajāna, yadasyārdhaṁ kva tad babhūva*, AV. 10.8.8.7). Thus the manifested cosmos is one Half and the unmanifest Brahman or the transcendent source of which there is no sign and no address is the other Half.

Thus the phrase, *Saptārdhagarbhāḥ* means 'Seven Sons of the Half' or *Ardha*. It may be noted that it is valid to speak of the Unborn principle both as *Ekam* and

[36] *Griffith*—Seven germs unripened yet are heaven's prolific seed; their functions they maintain by Vishṇu's ordinance.

Endowed with wisdom through intelligence and thought, they compass us about present on every side.

Wilson—The seven (sustaining), the embryo (rain) for half a year, the fecundating (element) of the world, abide, by appointment, in the various functions of Vishṇu. By their intelligence they pervade in thought all around (them), for they are intelligent and diffusive.

as *Ardham*, since we have to deal there with the mathematics of Infinity, both the Creator and the Cosmos being known as *Pūrṇam* or Plenum. These seven sons of *Ardha* are the same as the seven sons of Agni (explained under Mantra 1), and they are not different from Mind, Life and the five elements of Matter (*Manas, Prāṇa and Pañcha-Bhūtas*). In later Purāṇic philosophy they are known as *Mahadādiviśeshāntaḥ*, i. e. the Universal (*Mahat*), Individual (*Ahaṅkāra*) and the five Tanmātrās (*Viśeshāḥ*), each of which becomes distinguished by its own *Guṇa*.

The seven differentiated forms of *Ardha* together are known as the Cosmic Seed, *Bhuvanasya Retaḥ*. In its hidden source the Seed was undifferentiated as *Ekam* but for the sake of creation it became modified as Seven.

The Seven Sons like the Seven Rays of Sūrya are a team functioning together under the pressure of some tension or dynamism. The next question is therefore raised as to the nature of the power by which the vibrating force moving the octave of these waves is maintained. This is a basic question and the answer is quite distinct also, i.e. that it is the Ordinance of Vishṇu which he prescribed for himself in the form of his Three Steps, *Trivikrama*, (RV. 1.22.16-18, 1.15.2). What is stated as *Dharmāṇi* in RV. 1.22.18 is the same as *Pradiśā* of this Mantra (cf. also RV. 9.86.29, 1.101.7).

The meaning of the Three Steps of Vishṇu is also clear in Vedic cosmogony. It refers to the triadic pattern of creation, e.g., three fires, three devas, three lokas, etc. The Three Steps are in fact the three principles of twofold motion and the substratum of rest. Out of these three, the seven are created, viz., Mind, Life and Matter reckoned as Three (*Tri-tantu*), or with Matter taken as *Pañcha-Bhūtas*, they are regarded as Seven (*Sapta-tantu*).

In the second half of the Mantra, the seven sons of *Ardha* are spoken of as the Wise Ones, *Vipaśchitaḥ*, endowed wih the principle of Mind (*Manas*) and Intelligence (*Dhīti*). The obvious implication is to refer to these Seven Sons as the Āṅgirasa Ṛishis who are the sons of Agni (*Virūpāsa id ṛishayas ta idgambhīravepasaḥ, te aṅgirasaḥ sūnavaste agneḥ pari jajñire*, RV. 10.62.5). The seven Aṅgiras sages are a well-known motif of Vedic cosmogony, known as the sons of Heaven, *Divasputrāsaḥ*, Heroes born from an Asura who is Agni himself, *Asurasya vīraḥ*, (10.67.2) and of differentiated forms (*Virūpāsaḥ*), who have become endowed with the principle of Mind and higher Intelligence as *Viprāḥ* (*Vipraṁ padam Aṅgiraso dadhānā Yajñasya dhāma prathamaṁ mananta*, RV, 10.67.2), with which they were able to formulate for the first time the principle of Yajña.

These seven sons of *Ardha* as Mind, Life and Matter (*Manas, Prāṇa* and *Vāk* or *Pañcha-Bhūtas*) in fact represent the seven principles of manifestation, to which

there is reference in the last part of the Mantra. They encompass each individual in his threefold making of the physical, vital and psychical functions. As a matter of fact, they are Vasus, who are also counted as eight by taking Prāṇa with the dual-power of Prāṇa and Apāna. These are in later literature known as the Ashṭamūrti form of Śiva, which is elaborated in the Purāṇas (Liṅga Purāṇa, 11.2.12.43-44; Mārkaṇḍeya, 52.3,9). This doctrine is mentioned as Kumāra Vidyā in the ŚB. (6.1.3.18) in which eight forms of Agni are said to combine and produce a new form named Kumāra or the Life-principle produced as the Babe. (See my book : 'Sparks From The Vedic Fire', *Ashṭamūrti* Śiva, pp. 117-122). It is the very nature of these eight active principles (the *Vasus*) or the seven sons of *Ardha* that coming together they create a *Śarīra* which serves as the container or the treasure chest, *Vasudhāna Kosha* of the Life-principle (*Paribhuvaḥ*) The whole world is encompassed by them (*Viśvataḥ paribhavanti*).



MANTRA 37

न विजानामि यदिवेदमस्मि निण्यः संनद्धो मनसा चरामि ।
यदा मागन् प्रथमजा ऋतस्यादिद् वाचो अश्नुवे भागमस्याः ॥

—ऋ० वे० १।१६४।३७॥

I know not clearly whether I am the same as this Cosmos : a mystery am I, yet conceited in mind I wander.

When the First-Born Principle of Ṛita entered within me, then of this *Vāk* I obtained a portion.[37]

In this Mantra the doctrine of *Aham* or *Asmitā*, the individual Ego or Consciousness is stated with an unusual emphasis. In the first part of the Mantra there are two entities, namely *Idam*, i.e., the usual word for Cosmos in the Vedas, and secondly, *asmi* which is the same as *Aham* and is the doctrine of *Asmitā* of later philosophy. How the correct knowledge (*Vijānāmi* = *Vijñāna*) of the mutual relationship between the material world and its enjoyment on the one hand and of the individual Self, *Jīva-Aham*, on the other is not rightly appreciated. The individual soul become manifest in Matter, identifies itself with Matter or the world. It is therefore a part of higher wisdom and true *vijñāna* to know the distinction between Mind and Consciousness, between Self and Matter, between Jīva and Jagat. Vijñāna or right discrimination is the first duty of ontological quest. Here we also by implication may invite attention to the principle of Kāma, the primeval Desire by which the whole process of creation starts. In the Vedas, the Cosmos is spoken of as the *Kāmapra Yajña* of Prajāpati. In other words, the Cosmos is the Thought of the Maker. It is primarily a creation on the plane of mind (*Mānasī sṛishṭi*) which finds its fulfilment in Matter or the Bhūtas through *Maithunī Sṛishṭi*, as we know it. Kāma as the First Principle or the Seed of the

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[37]*Griffith*—What thing I truly am I know not clearly; mysterious, fettered in my mind, I wander.

When the first-born of the holy Law approached me, then of this speech I first obtain a portion.

Wilson—I distinguish not if I am this all; for I go perplexed, bound in mind ; when the first-born (perceptions) of the truth reach me, then immediately shall I obtain a portion (of the meaning) of that (sacred) word.

mind, both on the plane of the Universal and the individual, unfolds into expanding orbits and thereby is creating a flux in Matter. In Vedic ontology, *Kāma* is *Aham* and as explained in the Aitareya Up., the principle of Mind (*Manas*) was known to ancients by many names in their doctrine, e.g. *Hṛidaya*, *Saṁjñāna*, *Vijñāna*, *Prajñāna*, *Medhā*, *Dhṛiti*, *Mati*, *Manīshā*, *Jūti*, *Smṛiti*, *Saṅkalpa*, *Kratuḥ*, *Asu*, *Kāma*, *Vaśā* (AB. 3.2). *Prajñāna* and *Prajñā* are the same (*Sarvaṁ tat Prajñāne' tra Pratishṭhitam*, AB. 3.3)and ultimately, Prajñā, Mind or consciousness is of the nature of Brahman (*Prajñānaṁ Brahma*, AB. 3.3). This agrees with the statement that the Mind is the same as Prajāpati (*mano vai Prajāpatiḥ*, TB. 3.7.1.2, *Prajāpatirvai Manaḥ*, SB. 4.1.1.22); as Savitā (*mano vai Savitā*, ŚB. 6.3.1.13); and that Mind has become this all (*mana eva sarvam*, GB. 1.5.15).

The Purāṇas take up the subject in greater detail and give many more synonyms of the principle of Mind e.g. Sattva, Mahān, Kshetrajña, Brahma, Bhūḥ, Buddhi, Khyāti, Īśvara, Prajñā, Chitti, Smṛiti, Saṁvit, Vipura (Vāyu Purāṇa, Prakriyā Pāda, 4-25-3;30); Mahān Ātmā, Mati, Prabuddhi, Brahma, Khyāti, Īśvara, Prajñā, Dhṛiti, Smṛiti, Saṁvit (Kūrma Purāṇa, 1.4.17).

According to the Vedic doctrine this principle of Mind or Mahat or Virāj which is the same as Prakṛiti was produced by Purusha and hence it was a commingling of Purusha and Prakṛiti and therefore called in the Kūrma as Pradhāna Purushātmaka (*Prādurāsīn mahad bījaṁ pradhāna-purushātmakam*, Kūrma P. 1.4.16), In Vedic terms it was the common Womb, *Sayonitā* or co-existence of *Amartya* and *Martya* (*Amartyo martyenā sayoniḥ*, Mantra 30 and 38) which in later philosophical terms are known as Chit and Achit. As is well known there are three categories of manifestation, viz. *Achit* or Matter, *Chit-Achit* or Jīva, or *Kshetrajña* which as soul is Chit and as body Achit, and above these two the highest category of *Chit* alone, also known as Mind or Manas.

The Seer is perplexed as to the identity or otherwise or the nature of exact relationship between *Aham* and *Idam*, or between Amartya and Martya, or between Chit and Achit. This is a mystery for him, *Niṇyaḥ*, and although not enlightened about the secret, his ego or conceit of knowledge acts like a fetter, not allowing the vision of full Truth.

The second part of the Mantra contains two important doctrines, viz. that of *Ṛitasya Prathamajā*, the First-Born of Holy Order and of *Vāk*. Ṛita as we have said represents the universal source, Parameshṭhī, or the primeval ocean or the Waters. The First-Born of Ṛita as stated in the Ṛig Veda is Agni (*Agnirhi naḥ prathamajā ṛitasya*, 10.5.7). He is called *Apāṁnapāt*, son of the waters, or the first Mother principle. Agni existed in the beginning of Life (*pūrva āyuni*) and as the

Bull-Cow combined in himself both aspects of the creative principle, viz. the Father and the Mother (*Vṛishabhaścha Dhenuḥ*, RV. 10.5.7).

Prajāpati himself is stated to be the First-Born of Ṛita and by his fervour he cooked a mess for the sake of Brahman (*yamodanaṁ prathamajā ṛitasya Prajāpatistapasā Brahmaṇe' pachat*, AV. 4.35.1). The manifest creation (*Sṛishṭi*) is the potful of rice (*Odana*) cooked by the Creator in the form of Agni. Brahma and Kshatra or Amṛita and Mṛityu are both components of the Odana or potful of mess which is the food of Brahman (*yasya Brahma cha Kshatraṁ cha ubhe bhavata odane.* Kaṭha Up). In fact it is the principle of creativity or emanation from its source that is symbolised as the First-Born of the Cosmic Order, *Ṛitasya Prathamajā*. It has been designated as Agni, as Prajāpati, as Brahman (*Brahmāsya sarvasya prathamajā*, ŚB. 6.1.1.10). The First-Born of Ṛita is stated to be the companion of the Waters (*apāṁ sakhā prathamajā ṛitāvā kva svij jātaḥ kuta ā babhūva*, RV. 10.168.3). Where did it exist and where was it born ? are eternal questions which have not been resolved. The birth of Agni is a mystery. Agni, Vāyu and Indra are stated to be friends of the Waters. Indra is Haṁsa who is the companion of the divine Waters (*apāṁ divyānāṁ sakhye charantam*, 10.124.9). The Atharva amplifies the doctrine of *Ṛitasya Prathamajā*, stating that eight basic principles of manifestation were the First-Born of Ṛita, or the Cosmic Order (*Ashṭajātā bhūtā prathamajā ṛitasya*, AV. 8.9.21), of course referring to the eight sons of Aditi (*ashṭayoniraditirashṭaputrā*, AV. 8.9.21; also, RV. 10.72.8). These are the eight Ādityas and also the eight Vasus, who are different aspects of Agni and represent the eight basic elements of manifestation of Life in Matter, viz., *Manas*, *Prāṇa* and *Apāna* and the *Pañcha-Bhūtas*. These together form a group which is the First-Born of the World Mother, *Ṛitasya Prathamajā*.

This is one way of looking at things, but there is also another geometry for measuring out the progenitive principle and in the above hymn of the Atharva Veda, the First-Born is said to be comprised of six elements (*shaḍjātā bhūtā prathamajā ṛitasya*, AV. 8.9.16) and these six are explained as *Shaḍurvīḥ*, viz. the six expansive ones, referring to the six directions of space or more truly the sextuplicating principle of manifestation also known as *Vashaṭkāra*, i.e., the sixfold Stomas or stockpiling of *Vāk* in the form of Prāṇa and the five Bhūtas.

In short the principle of Ṛita is the same as the Universal and the First-Born, *Prathamajā*, is the individual, which is the same as Agni in its triple form (*tretā Agni* or *Trayī Vidyā*). As stated in the Atharva Veda, Ṛik, Sāma and Yajur are the First-Born Ṛishis. The same is also called *Ekarshi*, the Single Ṛishi, which is the principle of undifferentiated *Prāṇa* that existed in the beginning.

The spirit of the Mantra is that *Aham*, *Asmi*, *Agni*, *Brahman* are all to be viewed as the First-Born of the Holy Order and that signifies each centre of manifestation or Yajña which is said to be the *Nābhi* of the worlds. When that centre comes into existence it attracts by its inherent power the principle of Vāk or the *Pañcha Bhūtas*. The immortal Prāṇa comes in contact with the mortal *Bhūta* and this is the meaning of the last part of the Mantra. Vāk has two aspects, viz., the Transcendent Vāk which is infinite, *Sahasrākshara*. That Vāk is the universal Mother, Aditi, who is fixed, eternal and unmodified; but, for the sake of creation, the thousand-syllabled Vāk is measured out in syllables, viz. the Great Mother incarnates in the form of her youthful Daughter, each possessing an individual mind (*yuvatir manīshā* RV. 5.47.1). What is the share of Vāk that is apportioned (*vācho bhāgam*) in each manifested centre, known as the *Ṛitasya prathamajā*? The answer is that the dynamic Prāṇa in each centre which is Agni, Brahman, Prajāpati, or as *Ṛitasya Prathamajāḥ*, attracts within its vortex the eight Vasus or the eight elements of manifestation as explained above (*ete ḥīdaṁ sarvaṁ vāsayanti tasmād vasava iti*. ŚB. 11.6.3.6). These are the sheaths round each Self explained as Vāk, Prāṇa and Manas (*ātmā vaṅmayo manomayaḥ prāṇamayaḥ*. ŚB. 14.4.3.10). The Self is the *Yajamāna* and the entire chemical, physical, biological and psychical laws functioning in the body constitute a Yajña.

Vāk and Aditi are symbols of the principle of Motherhood and the Mother is literally the Measurer of the Mahā Bhūtas and Prāṇa and Manas which are focussed and are drawn in each centre of Life. It is the difference of Motherhood that is responsible for the infinite differentiation of Prāṇa in each species of Life. The Mother of the elephant and that of the ant are both samples of the universal Mother but on the plane of Matter different. This is due to so many factors of Karma. Kāla, Saṁskāra, Svabhāva, etc., which later philosophers analysed and explained. In fact the permutations and combinations of the eight Āditya Gods or the eight, Vasus, eleven Rudras and twelve Ādityas, or of the 33 Gods, or of the 303 Gods, or of the 3003 Gods, or of all Gods, *Viśve Devāḥ*, constitute a mysterious and wondrous mathematics by which the individual (*Pudgala* or *Purusha*) is variously constituted. No two individuals since the beginning of creation have been exactly alike in their faculties of Life, Mind and Matter. Even the same Mother giving birth to several sons becomes varied in the quality of her womb for creating the child. Such is the extreme individuation from the Universal where distinctions (*nānātva*) do not exist. In the same Tree each leaf, each fruit and each seed is different from the other, being an individual personality or *Ātmā*. So is it with each cell of the body. This great Law of Difference is implied in the phrase *Vācho Bhāgam*, which is commanded by each individual *Aham* or *Asmi*. It should also be noted that this unique

principle of individuation so dominant in seeking differences, at the same time remains in pursuit of its basic unity and aspires to mingle with its source. The governing force of unity or the unifying thread permeating the whole range of multiplicity is known as *Antaryāmin*, the force of the centre which although unmanifest controls the manifest forms, also called *Sūtrātmā*, the Thread-Spirit. If we look at things from the point view of Matter, we come across infinite differences, but the diversity slips out if the vantage point is the spirit.





Mantra 38—अपाङ् प्राङेति Moves Backward & Forward

MANTRA 38

अपाङ् प्राङेति स्वधया गृभीतोऽमर्त्यो मर्त्येना सयोनिः ।
ता शश्वन्ता विषूचीना वियन्ता न्य १ न्यं चिक्युर्न नि चिक्युरन्यम् ॥

—ऋ० वे० १।१६४।३८॥

The immortal having a common womb with the mortal, impelled by the intrinsic power, goes backward and forward.

The two move ceaselessly in opposite directions. They see the one and fail to see the other.[38]

This Mantra brings to a focus the two ideas contained in Mantras 30 & 31, viz., the mutual relationship of the Immortal and the Mortal, or the Deva and Bhūta, or Matter and Spirit in respect of their inherent power and dynamic force by which they are impelled to come together to form a union. It is recognised that there is an inherent strength (Griffith) or an intrinsic power (Coomaraswamy) called *Svadhā* which is operative in bringing the Immortal Prāṇa to contact the Mortal, Matter (*Bhūta* or *Sarira*). There are two principles, *Svāhā* and *Svadhā*. *Svāhā* is pure energy, the centrifugal force which contributes to the disintegration of Energy. It is just POWER, but *Svadhā* is the combined Father-Mother Principle which creates new Life by depositing sheaths of matter round Prāṇa. As the name implies, it is the depositing or condensing of the nebulous clouds into tangible rain, or the bringing together of the scattered particles of Energy and Matter at one focus or one centre and that is done through the agency of the Two Parents; and hence *Svadhā* is the symbol of the Pitṛis or the endless chain of ancestors both old and new. *Svāhā* is *Amartya* and *Svadhā* is *Martya*, both of which are essential as the powers of Amṛita and Mṛityu.

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[38]*Griffith*—Back, forward goes he, grasped by strength inherent, the Immortal born the brother of the mortal.

Ceaseless they move in opposite directions; men mark the one and fail to mark the other.

Wilson—The immortal, cognate with the mortal, affected by (desire of) enjoyment, goes to the lower or the upper (sphere) : but (men beholding them) associated, going everywhere (in this world together); going everywhere together (in the other worlds); have comprehended the one, but have not comprehended the other.

The word *gribhīta* ordinarily translated as 'grasped by' needs to be specially noted. There are three principles, viz., *Adhishṭhāna* (RV. 10.81.2), *Grabhaṇa* (1.116.5) and *Ārambhaṇa* (10.81.2) (TB. 2.8.9.6). *Ārambhaṇa* is the *Upādāna* or the material cause, that is Matter; *Grabhaṇa* is the *Nimitta* cause, the principle of Prāṇa, which supplies the motive force or energy to each active centre. The third is the substratum called *Adhishṭhāna* or *Ālambana.* According to the Vedic metaphysical thought, Brahma alone is the *Adhishṭhāna, Grabhaṇa and Ārambhaṇa* of the cosmos. He is the Infinite Ocean, *Samudra,* who in his transcendent aspect is *sans* the *Ālambana* (*anāsthan*), *sans* the positive Prāṇic forces, (*āgrabhaṇa*) and *sans* the material particles of physical manifestation. (*anārambhaṇa*), but in such a state of transcendence, somehow mysteriously by his own inherent power two dual forces in the form of the two Aśvins become manifest. By their dynamism of twin forces, they toe the Ship of the Cosmos having a hundred oars on which *Bhujyu* or the *Bhoktā Suparṇa,* the eater of the sweet berry of the Aśvattha tree (RV. 1.164.20), is transported to its destination. The principle of *Aham,* Ego or consciousness, is the *Bhujyu* or the individual soul sustained by the two Aśvins or Prāṇa and Apāna. For three nights and three days the Aśvins were Captains of Bhujyu's Boat, (RV. 1.116.4) the days and nights symbolising the principles of Light and Darkness as manifested in the two *Ahorātras* or the two Halves of the Months, or the two Halves of the Year. We see these two symbols of the basic duality exemplified in the three Yajñas, viz. daily *Agnihotra,* the *Daśa-Paurṇamāsa Ishṭis* and the *Ayaneshṭis.* The daily Agnihotra or the pattern of Ahorātra Yajña relates to the Bhūtas; that of *Darśa-paurṇamāsa* to the Prāṇa, and that of Saṁvatsara to the Manas.

In mantra 31 and 38 three kinds of movement are mentioned :

(1) *ā cha parā cha pathibhiścharantam*—approaching by his pathways and departing.

(2) *sa sadhrīchīḥ, sa vishūchīrvasānaḥ*—he is robed in gathered and difused splendour (Griffith). *Sadhrīchī* and *Vishūchī* are the cardinal and oblique points.

(3) *Apāṅ prāṅ eti*—back and forward goes he.

All these three are keyed to the basic rhythm (*chhandas*) of creation, which is of the nature of vibrations (*kampana*), oscillations, (*spandana, ejana*) contraction and expansion, (*samañchana—prasāraṇa*). The original *chhandas* basic to the Cosmos manifests on the level of Mind, Life and Matter and is marked by deep stirrings permeating all space between heaven and earth (*gambhīra vepasaḥ*). These are known as the Ṛishis, i.e. Prāṇic vibrations (*prāṇā vā ṛishayaḥ,* ŚB. 6.1.1.1). These Ṛishis are said to be of varying forms (*virūpāsaḥ*) and they are sons of Agni (*te agneḥ sūnavaḥ*) and they are sparking like live coals (*Aṅgirasaḥ sūnavaḥ*) where Aṅgiras

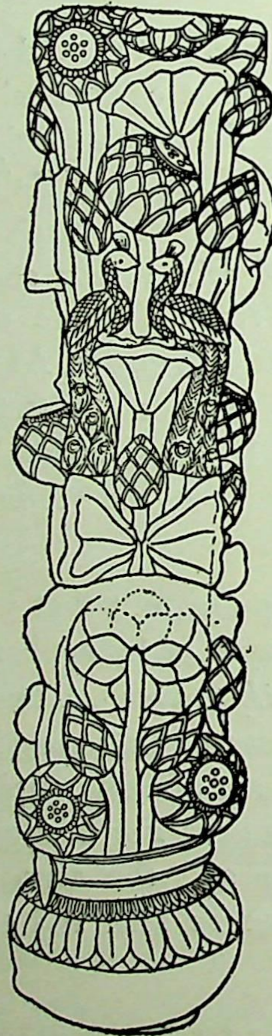
is explained as *Aṅgāra*, RV. 10.62.5, AB.3.34). This is but employing the language of symbols to explain the cosmogonical truths. The sons of Agni and of Aṅgiras are only the rays of light and heat, the actinic and thermal waves of which the solar spectrum is composed. The diversity of form (*Virūpāsaḥ*) is visible there as the effect of a basic duality produced by deep rhythmic vibrations. If we were to understand the solar spectrum of red and violet waves in Vedic terminology we might call it *Nīla-Lohita Indra-Dhanus* (AV. 15.1.6-7). This doctrine of the cosmos as manifesting in the form of colours of which the Blue (*Nīla*) and the Red (*Lohita*) are visible forms with their accompanying shades was formulated by the ancient Brahmavādins (*Nīlena lohitena Brahmavādino vadanti*, AV. 15.1.8): with dark-blue he envelopes, with red he clears it.

The basic idea behind this statement is of the cosmic rhythm referred to here as the forward and backward movement or cardinal or a straight and oblique motion or approaching and departing, all three being only different forms of that rhythm. The doctrine formed part of the philosophy of Rajas or Movement (*Rajovāda*), which was expressed in terms of white *rajas* and black *rajas*. The Sun in appearance or in day time is the symbol of white *rajas* and at night of black *rajas*, this twofold phenomenon originates from a single source which comes under the influence of tension by its own intrinsic power. As a matter of fact we are not yet in a position by our empirical methods to demonstrate the origin of this duality which has the widest implication for deciphering the relationship between Matter and Energy or Deva and Bhūta or the Immortal and the Mortal, both of which have a common origin (*Amartyo martyenā sayoniḥ*).

In simple words the Ṛishi points out that we mortal men with our methods of observation, either by naked eyes or by appliances, see the one and do not see the other (*nyanyaṁ chikyur na nichikyuranyam*). Our vision sees in Matter but is blind in the region of the Spirit or Deva or Prāṇa or Energy, whatever name we may choose to give it—and all names are of valid application. One sees the working of the Life-principle in the cell but obtains no photograph of Prāṇa itself; so also about the electrical energy in the atom and the sensory and motor perceptions in the brain or the Mind. The one can be seen and the other cannot, although they are from the same origin.

Three things are stated about these two opposite entities of the mortal and the immortal; firstly that they move (*viyantā*), secondly that this movement is in opposite directions, this way and that way as the movement of a pendulum which is a rhythm (*vishūchīnā*), and thirdly that the movement is ceaseless or eternal in time and space (*śaśvantā*). The word *viyantā* is also used with respect to the flapping of

the two wings by the Golden Bird in its flight towards heaven for a thousand days (*sahasrāhṇyaṁ viyatāvasya pakshau harer haṁsasya patataḥ svargam*, AV. 10.8.18). The Haṁsa of Golden Feathers is the same as Sūrya and Prāṇa, ie. Life universal and individual. He is on wings for an endless flight, the destination being the immortal heaven or the unknown and unmanifest world of Brahman.



MANTRA 39

ऋचो अक्षरे परमे व्योमन् यस्मिन् देवा अधि विश्वे निषेदुः ।
यस्तन्न वेद किमृचा करिष्यति य इत्तद्विदुस्त इमे समासते ॥

—ऋ० वे० १।१६४।३९॥

The Riks are supported on the Imperishable One (*Akshare*), in the Highest Empyrean (*Parame Vyoman*), where all the gods have their repose.

Who knows not that *Akshara*, what he may do with the Rik-Song? They who know it are assembled alround.[39]

This Mantra inculcates the doctrine of *Akshara*, the Imperishable Divine Principle which abides in the highest Empyrean, *Parame Vyoman*. Thinking of the basic duality and of their mysterious source, the thoughts of the Seer go to that transcendent principle known as *Akshara*. *Akshara Brahman* who is like an Ocean, is oozing drop by drop (*drapsaśchaskanda* (RV. 10.17.11) or *drapsaḥ samudram abhi Yajjigāti*, RV. 10.123.8) rising in billowy waves (*samudrādūrmirmadhuma udārat*, RV. 4.58.1, 10.123.2) and thereby creating the manifest forms in Matter (*tataḥ ksharatyaksharaṁ, tadviśvam upajīvati*, RV. 1.164.42).

The doctrine of *Parame Vyoman* is mentioned several times in the Ṛig Veda as typical of the highest transcendent Brahman who is the source of the Thousand-syllabled Speech (*Sahasrākshara Parame Vyoman*, 1.164.41), or of the one-syllabled *Akshara* that is Oṁkāra. Dīrghatamas himself has stated earlier that Agni first existed in *Parame Vyoman* where he was sighted by Mātariśvan for the sake of manifestation (*sa jāyamānaḥ parame vyomanyāviragnirabhavan mātariśvane*, RV. 1.143.2). There are two categories, viz. *Rajas* and *Parorajas*; the former is the material

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[39] *Griffith*—Upon what syllable of holy praise-song, as 'twere their highest heaven, the gods repose them.

Who knows not this, what will he do with praise-song? But they who know it well sit here assembled.

Wilson—All the gods have taken their seat upon this supreme heaven, the imperishable (text) of the Veda: what will he, who knows not this, do with the Veda? But they who do know it, they are perfect.

cosmos and the latter is the transcendent First Cause which is different from the physical world:—

> *Ārambhaṇam tattvamihochyate rajaḥ sarvāṇi chaitāni rajāṁsi manmahe*
> *dvaividhyameke tvavidan rajo vā parorajā vā na tato'nyadasti;*
> *Rajo'sti lokastu parorajāstu lokātigo jagato'sti bhinnaḥ,*
> —Madhusūdana Ojhā, *Daśavāda Rahasya*, p. 9.

The distinction between *Parama Vyoma* and *Vyoma* is material to Vedic thought. Vāk or Matter in the cosmos belongs to *Vyoma* and the one beyond it to *Parama Vyoma* or *Amṛitākāśa* from where immortal Speech, *Amṛitā Vāk*, has its source. *Parama Vyoma* is the region of Indra, named *Śvā Indra* and *Vyoma* or *Ākāśa* is the region of Mātariśvan (*mātari śvayate*) or Indra-Patnī who is the same as *Martyā Vāk*. The six Lokas are known as *Rajāṁsi* (*shaḍ ime rajāṁsi*) and the seventh as *Parorajas* which is the same as the self-existent Svayambhū. The worlds of Rajas are in the grip of dynamism or movement (*Gati*) and that of *Parorajas* is in the state of Rest or Stasis (*Shtiti*). *Śvā Indra* is the Seed or Germ having the potentiality of expansion and Mātariśvā is his Majesty as manifesting in the womb of the Mother. Indra is the Father and Indra-Patnī is the Mother-principle. It is stated that the Ṛiks constituting the total multiplicity of the syllables, have their source in the single *Akshara* which belongs to *Parama Vyoman*. The Ṛiks stand as the symbol of all uttered Speech, as typified in the Holy Praise Songs and the Chants, the uttered Speech of highest excellence and immortal glory. All these are after all on the plane of Matter produced by the human throat and as such mortal, but the meaning in them is eternal and belongs to the immortal transcendent Being who is identical with *Parama Vyoma*.

All the divine and earthly powers whom we name as devas, have their being and source in the *Akshara Brahman* (*yo devānāṁ nāmadhā eka eva*, RV. 10.82.3); he is the Great Question (*Sampraśna*), the Supreme Mystery (*guhyaṁ nāma tadapīchyam*) As stated in the second part of this Mantra He verily is worthy to be realised for the true knowledge of all the devas and of all the syllables of Ṛik Speech. The Seer in an eloquent style looks upon the *Vidatha* or the assembly of sages and says that they know the Reality of *Akshara Brahman*. In Mantra 23 it has been said that those who know the immortal *Gāyatra* energising the mortal *Gāyatra*, the immortal *Traishṭubha* behind the mortal *Traishṭubha* and the immortal *Jāgata Prāṇa* concealed behind the mortal *Jagatī*, they become entitled to Life immortal (*ya ittadvidusta amṛitatvamānaśuḥ*).

The spirit of the third part of the Mantra is caught in several later statements about the significance of Brahma-Vijñāna, realising the Truth or knowing the Reality and not merely being satisfied with words of the Veda or outer shell of

their meaning. Yāska says that the person who knows the Veda but does not know their meaning is only a load-bearer (*bhārvāha*). Patañjali in the same strain repeats that whatever is studied without realising its meaning and vociferously repeated or uttered by the throat is like an offering performed on a heap of fuel-sticks without fire enkindled in it.

They who know the *Akshara* 'well sit here assembled'; this statement also holds good for the devas in many forms, as Sūrya, Chandra, Vāyu, Agni, Indra, Savitā, Pūshā, Aśva, Gauḥ, Samudra, Vanaspati and all other manifested forms in each of whom inheres a deva-principle. They are arranged all roundus as learned sages in an assembly and they are chanting the glory of the divine Creator, the one Deva, supreme over them all. Each deva stationed in his place and performing an eternal *Sattra*, bespeaks the glory, order and truth of Prajāpati who has initiated the cosmic Yajña. They are the visible witnesses announcing the majesty of the divine Ordinances which constitute the Supreme Laws and the Truth (*Ṛitaṁ cha Satyaṁ cha*) of Creation.



MANTRA 40

सूयवसाद् भगवती हि भूया अथो वयं भगवन्तः स्याम ।
अद्धि तृणमध्न्ये विश्वदानीं पिब शुद्धमुदकमाचरन्ती ॥

—ऋ० वे० १।१६४।४०॥

The Cow with goodly pastures be adorable, and from her may we also be possessed of glory.

O Deathless Cow, feed on the grass and coming here drink limpid water in eternal time.[40]

Thinking of Vāk at two levels, the Ṛishi reverts to the doctrine of Vāk in terms of the Cow. This doctrine has been mentioned before in several Mantras, e.g., 7, 9, 17, 26-29; but amplifying the same imagery the doctrine is now stated with greater clarity as applicable to the principle of Vāk on two levels, viz. Prameshṭhī or the unmanifest universal and in the cosmos as measured out in the form of syllables. Mantra 40 continues the imagery of the Cow with distinct cosmogonical reference. The Cow becomes fortunate with goodly pasture which gives her grass to eat and water to drink at every season. The Cow is the Universal Mother or Infinite Nature. Her potentiality for producing the Calf or the Cosmos is the principle of *Bhaga*, her divine glory and lustre which is present everywhere and of which Sūrya is the visible symbol, the archetypal *Bhaga-vān*. Each *Bhaga* is the symbol of Motherhood, the potential centre of creativity or Nature's progenitive force. The Cow is therefore called *Bhaga-vatī* each and son of her inheriting this quality of ever creative power is called *Bhaga-vān* as given in this text. Each individual life-centre or organism is *Bhagavān* having one principal *Bhaga* and a thousand other similar points of creativity on the plane of Mind, Life and Matter. Thus each individual is a composite form of Three Thousands; each *Bhaga* is an Eye (*Chakshu*) that opens out on the three worlds or the three states of consciousness. This is the meaning of Indra or Madhya-Prāṇa be-

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[40]*Griffith*—Fortunate mayest thou be with goodly pasture, and may we also be exceeding wealthy.

Feed on the grass, O Cow, at every season, and coming hitherward drink limpid water.

Wilson—Cow, mayest thou be rich in milk through abundant fodder; that we also may be rich (in abundance); eat grass at all seasons, and, roaming (at will), drink pure water.

coming *Bhagavān*, i.e. possessed of a thousand generative organs and also a thousand-eyes. Since the Great Goddess is *Bhagavatī*, all her sons are *Bhagavantaḥ*. Indeed, each Goddess is known as *Bhagavatī* in the Indian religious tradition and it is also used as a significant epithet for each woman.

The life of the Cow depends on her pasturage or fodder (*Sūyavas*) being created by Sūrya. Food and water are both mentioned in the third part of the Mantra and are the two forms of Soma on which Agni or the Life-principle depends. Agni as *annāda* subsists on the assimilation of Soma. It is therefore said in the second line of the Mantra that the Cow should eat grass and drink water. The word *tṛiṇa* is significant and reminds us of its use in the Kena Up., where the whole cosmos is symbolised as a blade of Green Grass, *Tṛiṇa*, which is as great a mystery as the whole creation (*tasmai tṛiṇaṁ nidadhau*). This is the Law, that the working of the minute atom and the big star follows an identical pattern, or a single cell and the whole organism have been conceived in an identical mould; and therefore even a small green straw with live matter is a baffling challenge to the gods, who do not know its secret and source. The Cow feeds on that Soma or the source of immortal Life, which is becoming the green grass or her fodder. The pure water represents the primeval Soma which is also said to be Prāṇa. Both grass and water are but two aspects of creative Prāṇa, the one in the form of Agni and the other Soma; both are essential for the maintenance of the universal Cow or Mother Nature herself. In each individual she is present; she subsists on Agni and Soma.

The Cow is named *Aghnyā* , the inviolable and death-conquering Mother who is the universal Virāj. She is immortality and infinity personified, aptly named as Aditi for whom there is no death or destruction (*mā gām anāgām aditim vadhishṭa*, RV. 8.101.15). In Mantra 27 also she is called *Aghnyā* to whom there is no death and whose source is beyond the mortal world, yielding immortal milk for the two Aśvins or the divine healers, present in each centre as *Prāṇāpānau*. Other epithets like *Avadhyā, Adhṛishyā, Aparājitā* are equally applicable to Aditi Cow, who is *Vaiśvadevī*, the Mother of all gods, and yet *Kevalī*, the self-existent and unmodified Mother—the Great Goddess pre-eminent in creation.

The word *Viśvadānīm* is also significant, referring to infinite time and space which is the pasture of the universal Cow and which stands for the cosmic Yajña as the sum total of all the cetegories of manifestation. This great Yajña of the cosmos with its thousandfold forms and names is also called *Viśvarūpya* (RV. 1.164.9) and its complete replica becomes visible in the prāṇic energies, *Prāṇa-maṇḍala*, or *Saṁvatsara*, the revolving Wheel of Time.

The life of the Cow depends on the power of movement, *charantī*; indeed the Sanskrit words *Gau* and *Gati* are semantically identical. The principle of Parameshṭhinī Āmbhṛiṇī Vāk as enunciated in RV. 10.125, is the same as *Gauḥ* and that of Gaurī in Mantra 41 is also another form of her and both derive their effective manifestation through movement (*ahaṁ rudrebhir vasubhiścharāmyaham ādityairuta viśvadevaiḥ,* RV. 10.125.1).





Mantra 41—सहस्राक्षरा परमे व्योमन् Thousand-syllabled Speech in the Highest Heaven

MANTRA 41

गौरीर्मिमाय सलिलानि तक्षत्येकंपदी द्विपदी सा चतुंष्पदी।
अष्टापंदी नवंपदी बभूवुषीं सहस्रांक्षरा परमे व्योंमन् ॥

—ऋ० वे० १।१६४।४१॥

Gaurī, fashioning Waters, has lowed or measured out, she, the one-footed, two-footed, four-footed, eight-footed, also becoming nine-footed. She is the Thousand-syllabled in the highest Heaven.[41]

It does not appear to us that the veil of obscurity over the stanza has been lifted in the two translations given below. Recently, van Buitenen has drawn attention to this passage, but without being able to shed any additional light.[1] The stanza bristles with technical terms which should first be explained with clarity to reach the under-lying meaning :

What is *gaurī* ? What is the meaning of *mimāya* in this context ? What is the reference of *salilāni* ? What is the exact conception of *takshatī* ? What is denoted by the symbolism of *ekapadī*, *dvipadī*, *catushpadī*, *ashṭāpadī*, *navapadī* ? What is meant by *sahasra* and *akshara* separately and conjointly ? Lastly, what is the Vedic meaning of *parama vyoma* and how is the *sahasrākṣharā* form of Gaurī consistent with *parame vyoman* ? Let us grapple with these questions.

Gaurī : The accepted meaning is 'she-buffalo,' or the female *Bos Gaurus*. It is distinguished from the cow, the former being the symbol of Varuṇa's 'waters' and the latter of Indra or Sūrya. The reason is twofold, *viz*. that the buffalo is an animal that loves water, and secondly its skin is of a dark colour, opposed to the white coat of the cow. In Vedic cosmogony two stages are formulated, the preceding one is that of Varuṇa and the subsequent one of Indra. Varuṇa is the "lord of

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[41] *Griffith*—"Forming the water-floods, the buffalo hath lowed, one-footed or two-footed or four-footed, she, Who hath become eight-footed or hath got nine feet, the thousand-syllabled in the sublimest heaven."

Wilson—"The sound (of the clouds) has been uttered, fabricating the waters, and being one-footed, two-footed, four-footed, eight-footed, nine-footed, or infinite in the highest heaven."

waters," the deity of the ocean (*samudra*), the latter signifying the primeval source of the universe in which all matter exists in an undifferentiated form, and which conceals within its womb all the possibilities of existence. Varuṇa is the great Asura that lords this ocean. His representative in the subsequent creational stage is Vṛitra who enters into conflict with Indra. Both Varuṇa and Vṛitra point to the basic root *vṛi*, 'to cover, to conceal, to obstruct' (cf. *yachcha vṛtvātishṭhaṁs-tadvaraṇo 'bhavat taṁ vā etaṁ varaṇaṁ santaṁ varuṇa ity āchakshate parokshena*, Gopatha-Br., I.1.7; *vṛitro ha vā idaṁ sarvaṁ vṛitvā śiśye yadidamantareṇa dyāvāpṛithivī, sa yadidaṁ sarvaṁ vṛtvā śiśye tasmād vṛitro nāma*, Śatapatha Br., I.1.3.4). Indra's representative in the region of Varuṇa is Mitra, the two being the divinities of water and fire. *Gaurī* and *Gauḥ* were accepted as the symbols of Varuṇa and Indra (including his cosmic aspect Bṛihaspati) respectively. The bison and the bull (*mahisha* and *ṛishabha*) are their male forms which also occur in the Ṛigveda.

Gaurī is the symbol of *Vāk*, according to the speculation of the Brāhmaṇas,[2] and the commentators, of whom Sāyaṇa takes it as *mādhyamikā vāk*, the thunder of the atmospheric region or clouds, and Ātmānanda as *gauraṁ śuddhaṁ brahma, tatparā śrutiḥ gaurīḥ*, i.e. the Vedic speech that is devoted to the doctrine of absolute Brahman.[3] *Vāk* or Speech plays an important part in the cosmogony of the Ṛigveda. *Vāk* is an attribute of *ākāśa*, and *ākāśa* is the first and foremost of the five gross material elements, and therefore *Vāk* became the symbol, *par excellence*, of the Pañchabhūtas. *Vāk* is preceded by *Prāṇa*, and *Prāṇa* by *Manas* in the deeper order of cosmic evolution. There is even a greater sublimation of the doctrine of Speech in which *Vāk* is equivalent to *Brahman*, both as *aja* and *jāyamāna*, i.e. combining the transcendental and immanent aspects of Reality, or the complete symbols of the entire cosmic coherence, and therefore designated as *chatushpadī* According to the esoteric speculations of the Brāhmaṇas, fully countenanced by the Ṛigveda, *Vāk* as the one-footed (*ekapadī*) cow has reference to the unborn or transcendental aspect, and as the four-footed (*chatushpadī*) to that aspect which is the source of all the triadic patterns (*trika*), or pulsations (*prāṇāgni*), or motions (cf. *yā vāk so 'gniḥ*, Gopatha Br. 2.4.11).

Mimāya : It has the simple meaning of 'uttering sound,' 'bleating,' 'lowing,' from the root *mā*, which refers to the bellowing sound of cows, calves, etc. The root *mā* (*mimāti, mimīte*) also means 'to measure out,' 'to apportion'. It is precisely both meanings that hold good here. The spatial depth to which the lowing of the milch-cow that is *Vāk* travels, marks the measure of her formulating the cosmic forms. The rhythmic pulsation of Speech in the sacrifice defines the limits of *ākāśa* or the Pañcabhūtas, i.e. the material externalism through *yajña*. This is the articulation of *Vāk* through ritual, which on the cosmic level is the sacrifice of

Prajāpati with the utterance of *brahman*, the most subtle and highest form of manifestation.

The lowing cow is said to possess a cosmic form (*viśvarūpya*) which becomes completely manifest as soon as the cow has travelled a distance of three *yojanas* (*amīmed vatso anu gām apaśyad viśvarūpyaṁ trishu yojaneshu*, RV. I.164.9). This is a symbolical reference to the triad of *Manas-Prāṇa-Vāk* (Mind-Life-Matter) which constitutes the basic pattern of the cosmological manifestation envisaged in Vedic metaphysics. The three *yojanas* exhibit the *viśvarūpya*, or all the forms that the cosmic four-footed Cow can create.

Salilāni : This is a comprehensive term, synonymous with *āpaḥ*, *samudrāḥ*, (RV. 1.164.42), *arṇavaḥ*, etc., all referring to the primeval material cause that exists *in principio* and carries within its womb all the possibilities of existence. We have a clear statement in RV. 10.121.7, *āpo ha yad bṛihatīr viśvam āyan garbhaṁ dadhānā janayantīr agnim, tato devānāṁ samavartatāsur ekaḥ kasmai devāya havishā vidhema*. Here the *bṛihatīḥ āpaḥ* are the same as *salilāni* or *arṇava samudra*. They are called *bṛihatī*, 'mighty,' because they have the potency of *bṛiṁhaṇa*, 'growth, by way of producing Agni, which is the universal germ. Agni represents the one Life-principle (*eka asu*) of all the differentiated divinities in the cosmos. The region of these primeval Waters is also spoken of as *ṛita-sadana* (RV. 1.164.47), the 'Dark Descent' (*kṛishṇa niyāna*, RV. 1.164.47) of Varuṇa, or the 'Dark Roots' of cosmic alchemy. The Purāṇas give an elaborate account of this primeval watery source under the caption of *ekārṇava vidhi*, and specially with reference to the characteristic doctrine of *āpo nārāḥ* and *nārāyaṇa*. The cosmic primal Waters (*salilāni*) represent the state of equilibrium (*sāmyāvasthā*), the stillness of the infinite ocean, which becomes excited or agitated for the sake of creation. The greatest achievement of the Waters which contain within their womb the universal germ (*viśva garbha*, RV. 10.121.7) is to give birth to Agni, which is therefore described as the first concrete manifestation of *ṛita* (*agnir ha naḥ prathamajā ṛitasya pūrva āyuni vṛishabhaścha dhenuḥ* RV. 10.5.7) and is spoken of both as the Milch-Cow and the Bull, for mutual fecundation to initiate the beginning of life. *Brahma* is elsewhere said to be the 'first-born' of all (*brahmāsya sarvasya prathamajam*, ŚB. 6.1.1.10); or Agni Prajāpati as the first born of *ṛita* is said to cook the cosmic *odana* (*yamodanaṁ prathamajā ṛitasya prajāpatistapasā brahmaṇe'pachat*, Atharva 4.35.1). The last imagery assumes that Agni as the 'Eater of Food' (*annāda*) cooks for itself the 'Food' (*anna*) which is the cosmos itself. The intimate relationship of *Vāk* and Agni as *ṛitasya prathamajā* is clearly enunciated in another stanza of the Ṛigveda : "What thing I truly am I know not clearly; mysterious, fettered in my mind I wander. When the first-born of *ṛita* enters within me, then of *Vāk* I obtain the first portion"; *na vi jānāmi yadivedam*

asmi ninyaḥ saṁnaddho manasā charāmi, yadā māgan prathamajā ṛitasyād id vācho aśnuve bhāgam asyāḥ, RV. 1.164.37). The pulsation of life as the rhythmic uttering of *Vāk* on the plane of material or *ākāśika* manifestation begins with the birth of Agni on the substratum of *Āpaḥ* or *Salilāni*. In RV. 1.164.42, it is stated that the oceans in which Gaurī has her abode undergo a pouring out or flowing of their contents by which the manifested cosmos is sustained (*tasyāḥ samudrā adhi vi ksharanti tena jīvanti pradiśaś chatasraḥ*). This verily corresponds to the idea contained in *salilāni takshatī*.

Takshatī : The root-meaning of *taksha* is 'to fashion forms by cutting' and that meaning suits very well the context, provided it is clearly explained in the background of an approved cosmogony. The conception of *takshaṇa* is kindred to that of *rūpa-vikartana* (cf. *tvashṭā hi rūpāṇi vikaroti*, Taittirīya Br. 2.7.2.1), *rūpa-piṁśana, vi-ksharaṇa* (cf. RV. 1.164.42), *prāṇana-apānana* (cf. RV. 10.189.2), *samañchana-prasāraṇa* (cf. Yajur. 27.45; also ŚB. 8.1.4.10), *kṣhobhaṇa* (Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa 46.12), *spandana* (Devī Bhāgavata, 1.7.50), etc. Wilson translates *takṣatī* as 'fabricating the waters,' Griffith as 'forming the water-floods,' and van Buitenen as 'building (?) separate lakes'. These are all correct in so far as they go, but the real significance is that the principle of *Vāk* creates or fashions out the manifold forms out of the waters of the Infinite Ocean of the ultimate Reality. Agni is the first manifestation, the same as *Akshara* or *Hiraṇyagarbha*,[5] from the womb of the Waters and is the same as *Vāk* for the purpose of building separate units from the single undifferentiated ocean (*vāg vai tvashtā vāg ghīdaṁ sarvaṁ tāshṭīva*, Aitareya Br. 2.4). All the *rūpas* are called *tvāshṭra* (*tvāshṭrāṇi vai rūpāṇi*, ŚB. 2.2.3.4), i.e. depend for their genesis on the principle of cutting, or making separate fragments out of one whole, i.e. Brahman as *ekamevādvitīyam* is transformed into *bahudhā* (RV. 1.164.46), the One into one, two, three...and infinity. The work of *Vāk* as *Tvashṭā* is essential to creation, which is tantamount to the One becoming the Many, the one Rudra incarnating as the thousand Rudras (Yajur. 16.54). What is *Tvashṭā* in the Veda corresponds to *Virūpāksha* of the Purāṇas, who is one of the eleven Rudras (cf. Matsya Purāṇa, 5.29-30).

Ekapadī : The string of five epithets, *viz. ekapadī, dvipadī, chatushpadī, ashṭāpadī, navapadī*, is undisputed as to the literal meaning, but their symbolism is of metaphysical significance. *Pada* is equivalent to 'motion,' and *ekapadī*, or the one-footed, is that which is capable of undivided motion, i.e. absence of all motion in different directions. *Ekapadī* therefore refers to the principle of rest or stasis (*sthiti*), the locking of directional motions in the centre (*hṛidaya*). In the Śāṅkhāyana Āraṇyaka 7 (cf. Aitareya A. 2.3.5 ff.) a series of progenitive triads is expounded, of which the most significant from the point of view of motion is the one comprising *gati* (procession) and *nivṛitti* (recession) which are said to be the parents of

sthiti (stasis).[6] *Gati* is Indra, *nivṛitti* or *āgati* is Vishṇu, and *sthiti* or *pratishṭhā* is Brahmā. The one-footed cow corresponds to what is called Aja, the Unborn (cf. *ajasya rūpe kim api svid ekam*, RV. 1.164.6), or *Ūrdhva Eka,* the Single Erect One (RV. 1.164.10), or what is graphically called *Aja Ekapād* (RV. 2.31.6, 10.66.11), the unborn one-footed or motionless principle of transcendental Reality, which in the Purāṇas is the name of the first of the eleven Rudras (Matsya, 5.29). It may be noted that the *Ekādaśa* Rudras are the sons of Surabhi, the same as the Milch-Cow of the Gods (Harivaṁśa, I.3.49-52).

Dvipadī : The two-footed cow is also a creature of phantasy. It refers to that phase of *Vāk* in which the original transcendental Reality becomes relative for the sake of manifestation. There is a Vedic conception to support it. The absolute undifferentiated One (*Ekam*) becomes divided as *Ardham* and *Ardham* : *ardhena viśvaṁ bhuvanaṁ jajāna yadasyārdhaṁ kva tad babhūva,* Atharva. 10.8.7; also 10.8.13 with variant *yadasyārdhaṁ katamaḥ sa ketuḥ*; same 11.4.22. This basic metaphysical conception of the One being cast in two halves for creation goes back to the Ṛigveda, 6.30.1, *bhūya id vāvṛidhe vīryāya eko ajuryo dayate vasūni, pra ririche diva Indraḥ pṛithivyā ardham id asya prati rodasī ubhe.* Indra as *ekaḥ* undergoes self-fission into two *ardhas,* the one is beyond earth and heaven (cf. *katamaḥ sa ketuḥ*) and the other is manifest as the *rodasī* worlds.

The doctrine of *ardha* is definitely mentioned in RV. 1.164.36, which stanza, as noted by Griffith according to Ludwig, 'is one of the most unintelligible in the whole Veda.' In view of the above explanation of *ardha,* the meaning becomes transparent : Seven are the children of *Ardha* which constitute the seed of creation. They function (as differentiated units) by Vishṇu's ordinance (of triple striding) : *saptārdhagarbhā bhuvanasya reto vishṇos tishṭhanti pradiśā vidharmaṇi.* The One becoming the cosmos first evolves as *ardha* and *ardha*; the latter *ardha* becomes triadic by Vishṇu's motion (cf. *idaṁ vishṇur vi chakrame tredhā ni dadhe padam,* RV. 1.22.17), and then those three encompass everything as seven, *viz. manas, prāṇa* and *vāk* or the five gross elements, as explained above. These seven form the germinative seed of the universe, and in themselves they are the children of *ardha,* i.e. the manifested cosmos (*rodasī, or dyāvāpṛithivī*).

The metaphysical principle of an underlying relative duality is enunciated emphatically in the Nāsadīya Sūkta (RV. 10.129) as *sad-asad, amṛita-mṛityu, parastāt-avastāt, prayati-svadhā*; also Purusha Sūkta (RV. 10.90) as *tripād-punaḥpād, ūrdhva-iha* also as *aditi-diti* (RV. 5.62.8), *ṛita-satya* (RV. 10.190.1), *prāṇāpāna* (RV. 10.189.2), *aja-rajas* (RV. 1.164.6), and many other categories of manifestation, e.g. *avyaya-akshara, agni-soma,* etc. These are related to the conception of *Vāk* as *dvipadī,*

of which the two feet are OM and AUM, the latter symbolizing the triadic patterns that have flowed into the three worlds, of which the most significant are the three utterances (*vyāhṛitis*) known as *bhūḥ*, *bhuvaḥ*, *svaḥ*. One foot of the *dvipadī* cow is fixed, changeless, eternal, same as *Sthāṇu*, expressed as *Eka eva Rudro na dvitīyāya tasthe* (Taitt. Saṁ., 1.8.6.1); it is the one foot which the Golden Haṁsa stationed in the floods or precosmic Waters, does not move (*ekaṁ pādaṁ notkhidati salilāddhaṁsa uchcharan*, Atharva., 11.4.21), while the other foot is identical with motion by which creation is engendered.

Chatushpadī : The four-footed cow is a normal animal, which as the symbol of *Vāk* is mentioned in RV. 1.164.45; *chatvāri vāk parimiatā padāni tāni vidur brāhmaṇā ye manīshiṇaḥ, guhā trīṇi nihitā neṅgayanti turīyaṁ vāco manushyā vadanti*. Here the three feet are said to be hidden in the cave, i.e. unmanifest, and only the fourth foot becomes manifest as human speech. It exactly corresponds to the conception of four-footed Purusha, of whom *tripaād* is 'above' and one *pāda* is this manifest cosmos. But from the point of view of the created worlds, it is the other way also, *viz.*, the cosmic triad symbolizes the three feet of the Milch-Cow of Speech, and the fourth one is beyond these worlds. As well-known in the metaphysical cogitations of the grammarians, the one is the *Parā Vāk*, and the other three are *Paśyantī*, *Madyamā* and *Vaikharī*. Sometimes the *Vāk* is described as *trayīmayī dhenu*, having four udders, *viz.*, *svāhākāra, vashaṭkāra, svadhākāra* and *hantakāra* 14.8.9.1). According to the Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa, the Ṛishis are sustained by the teat called *vashaṭ,* the Pitṛis by *svadhā*, the Devas by *svāhā*, and men by *hanta* (Mārk., 29.10-11; see my Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa, A Cultural Commentary, pp. 104-106).

Ashṭāpadī : The eight-footed cow involves the symbolism of the number 8, e.g. in RV. 1.164.27, the *aghnyā* cow is called *Vasupatnī*, the protector of the eight Vasus, and she comes yearning for her calf which is the manifest form of the Vasus (*hiṁkṛiṇvatī vasupatnī vasūnāṁ vatsam ichchhantī manasābhyāgāt*). Here *Vāk* is the Cow and Agni (i.e. *Prāṇa*) is her Calf. According to RV. 10.5.7, Agni is the first-born of Ṛita (*agnir ha naḥ prathamajā ṛitasya*), and in Atharva. 8.9.21, Eight Elements are said to be the first-born of Ṛita. These constitute the Eight Vasus, *viz.*, *Manas, Prāṇa-Apāna,* and the Five Elements of Matter, which in later ritualistic symbolism are the eight forms of Agni (cf. ŚB. 6.1.3.18, *tānyetāni ashṭau agnirūpāṇi, kumāro navamaḥ*), and in the Purāṇas the eight *mūrtis* of Śiva (*pañcabhūtāni chandrārkāvātmeti munipuṅgavāḥ, mūrtayo 'shṭau śivasyāhur devadevasya dhīmataḥ*/ Liṅga Purāṇa, 2.12.42*cd*-43*ab*).

Āpaḥ or *Samudrāḥ* : Gaurī is cow as the mother of infinite creation, converting the primeval waters into milk through being fertilized by the Bull, the

self-existent Prajāpati, or Agni. Conversion of water into milk is the symbol of motherhood; thus the Cosmic Cow (*kāmadughā*) fills the whole world with progenitive potency, which in ritualistic terminology is called the rain of *ghṛita* (*ād id ghṛitena pṛithivī vyudyate*. RV. 1.164.47), or the gathering of the minute particles of butter (*sambhṛitam pṛishadājyam,* RV. 10.90.8). The symbolism of butter is patent. When tiny globules of butter permeate water, it is transformed into milk. Water extinguishes fire, but butter enkindles it, therefore butter is the concrete form of Agni (*etad vā agneḥ priyaṁ dhāma yad ghṛitam,* Taitt. Br. 1.1.9.6). When we refer to *Vāk* as *ashṭāpadī,* there is verily a reference to it as identical with Agni, with the Vasus, with Ṛigveda, etc., an established symbolism at several levels of reference, of which the basic conception is that of *aṣhṭāksharā Gāyatrī.*

Nāvapadī : The conception of the nine-footed cow exhausts all the possibilities of numerical manifestation, since nine is the highest numerical in the series 1, 2, 3.... The nine-syllabled meter is the *Bṛihatī,* consisting of thirty-six *aksharas* (*ṣhaṭ-triṁśad-akshara vai bṛihatī,* ŚB. 8.3.3.8; Aitareya Br., 4.24). The maximum number of consonants that can be tagged to the utterance of one vowel is nine. That indicates the maximum limit of manifestation, *navo navo bhavati jāyamānaḥ,* RV. 10.85.19). The commentators understand by it the eight quarters of space including the intermediate regions, with the Sun as the ninth (*upari digapekshayā sūryeṇa vā navadigadhishṭhānā,* Sāyaṇa), or the eight manifest forms, besides the ninth which is unmanifest as being beyond all attributes (*ashṭamūrtinirguṇavishayatvāt,* Ātmānanda). So does Gaurī become omniform. In ritualistic terms, *navapadī* corresponds to *navāha,* which is the model of a year (*navāho vai saṁvatsarasya pratimā,* Shaḍviṁśa Br. 3.12). Each day as the unit of time is a complete specimen of the *Saṁvatsara,* which is the symbol of Sūrya and all the movements associated with it. The *navāha yajña* is a model of the *saṁvatsara yajña.*

Sahasrākshara : The Speech that exists in *parama vyoma,* i.e. *paramākāśa,* the undifferentiated transcendent 'Space' is the *Parā Vāk.* It comprises 'a thousand syllables.' *Sahasra* is equivalent to *sarvam* (ŚB. 4.6.1.15), *bhūmā* (ŚB. 3.3.3.8) and *paramam* (Tāṇḍya, 16.9.2), the highest entity transcending all the categories of manifestation. *Akshara* is a syllable, an irreducible ultimate or impartible unit of speech, which is the symbol of motion or pulsation, since all speech is visible activity against the substratum of silence. *Akṣhara* is flowing (*viksharaṇa,* RV. 1.164.42) of the Oceanic Waters that existed in the beginning. When the reference is to *sahasrākshara,* it is the negative uncreated entity that becomes manifest as the created Akshara or the Universe as a result of *rajas.* Here was postulated a higher and a lower entity, both being the two aspects of the same

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Reality, be it named as Word, Purusha, Prajāpati, Satya, Jyotis, Hiraṇyagarbha, etc., the first and fundamental principle of the cosmic order grasped as the "Imperishable Being." It is that comprehensive, transcendent, vast and tremendously effective First Cause that calls into existence the cosmos—the ultimate that is behind and beyond creation. The *sahasrākshharā* is equivalent to the *sahasraśīrshā Purusha*, which as the highest source of creation is both *asat* and *sat*, unmanifest and coextensive with all the categories of the manifested worlds.

Where does the infinite *Akṣhara* exist ? The finite syllables, i.e. all sounds, originate from *ākāśa* or ether, which is the medium of the word. The seers postulated for the *sahasrākshharā Vāk* as her ultimate source a *paramākāśa* or *parama-vyoma*, both *Vāk* and *vyoma* being closely associated or being identical as *guṇa* and *bhūta*.

Parama vyoma : The idea of the highest entity as *ākāśa* elaborated in the famous dialogue of Yājñavalkya and Gārgī (Bṛihad Ār. Up. 3.6) existed in the Ṛigveda in the form of *parama vyoma* : *pṛichchhāmi vāchaḥ paramaṁ vyoma* (RV. 1.164.34). Manifest *Vāk* originates from *vyoma* or *ākāśa*, which is the most subtle of the five material elements. The quest therefore was for an ultimate source whose primacy stood above all, i.e. the *parama vyoma*, and it was declared that the latter was the same as Brahman (*brahmāyaṁ vāchaḥ paramaṁ vyoma*, RV. 1.164.35), who is identical with *Vāk* (*vāg vai brahma,* Aitareya, 6.3, ŚB. 2.1.4.10), and also four-footed like her (*tad etachchatushpād brahma*, Chhāndogya Up. 3.18.2; also *so 'yamātmā catushpāt*, Māṇḍukya Up. 2). As Yājñavalkya explains to Gārgī that the basic support of even *ākāśa* is *Akṣhara*, the uncreated and completely transcendent reality, so does Ṛigveda identify *parama vyoma* with *Akshara*, wherein are stationed all the *Ṛichas* and all the Gods (*ṛicho akshare parame vyoman yasmin devā adhi viśve nisheduḥ*, RV. 1.164.39).

It is the design of kind Providence and of kindly Mother Nature that we should realise *Ānandam* at each step or stage of Life, and in each Breath. Prāṇa is the great *Madhu* or the Mead of the Cosmos. In each out-going and in-coming Breath, there is the realisation of Joy, of the tasting of Honey that is Life itself. We are all Honey-eating Birds or veritable Honey-suckers (*Madhvadaḥ Suparṇāḥ*). It is not enough that food may be eaten to sustain the body, but it is necessary that full joy should be derived in the taking of that Food, each morsel is full of sweetness and ecstacy to the experienced on both the gross plane and in subtle vibrations. Similarly, in the act of procreation the principle of Motherhood attains its full fruition through the most blissful experience in which the physical, the vital and the psychical components of man's making become saturated with the highest joy

that is in creation. The creative act is the sweetest Mead on this side of Life, on the other side and its apposite principle Joy of the Spirit called Brahmānanda. It is a two-fold experience of *Rasa*, one during descent in Matter and the other during one's ascent to the Spirit, both are pure and sublime as part of Nature's own Creative Scheme and comprised in the single Mystery named Life. This principle of *Madhu* or sweet Mead was a favourite doctrine of the Vedic Ṛishis who speak of *Madhu* as a universal flood enveloping the clouds in the sky, the winds in the mid-region, the rivers on the earth, the waves of the sea, the growing plants and even the particles of dust which supply food to the sprouting seeds. In the eyes of the Seers, Honey-sucking is the Law of Life and Agni as the Life-principle is said to be the tongue of the gods, i.e. yeaning to lick the Honey. By an accepted symbolism the immortal Heaven was symbolised as *Madhu* and Mother Earth as *Dadhi* and the point of conjunction between the two viz. *Antariksha* as *Ghṛita* (*Dadhi haivāsya lokasya raso rūpaṁ ghṛitamantarikshasya madhvamushya*, ŚB. 7.5.1.3). Honey is the symbol also of the One Deity, that is supreme over all (*Mahatyai vā etat devatāyai rūpaṁ yan madhu*, TB. 3.8.14.2) since the relish that is present in honey is a symbol, howsoever infinitessimal it be, of the transcendent *Rasa* in the Supreme Spirit.

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1 7. A. B. van Buitenen, "Akṣara," *JAOS*, 79 (1959), p. 180.

2 A very important citation from the Jaim. Up. Br. 1. 10. 1-2 given by van Buitenen, according to which She is *kāmadughā*, the milch-cow of desires; the passage is an exegesis of the Rigvedic stanzas 1. 164. 41-42.

3 C. Kunhan Raja, *Asya Vāmasya Hymn* (1956), p. 80.

4 W. Kirfel, *Das Purāṇa Pañcalakṣaṇa* (Leiden, 1927), pp. 6—19.

5 For a full explanation of *hiraṇyagarbha*, see V. S. Agrawala, "Hiraṇyagarbha," *Purāṇa*, Vol. II (1960, Kashiraj Trust, Ramnagar, Varanasi,), pp. 285-306

6 A. Coomaraswamy, "Time and Eternity" (*Artibus Asiae*, 1947), p. 9.



MANTRA 42

तस्याः समुद्रा अधि वि क्षरन्ति तेन जीवन्ति प्रदिशश्चतस्रः ।
ततः क्षरत्यक्षरं तद्विश्वमुप जीवति ॥

—ऋ० वे० १।१६४।४२॥

From her the (Four) Oceans flow (as her four teats); the Four Regions of Space are sustained by them.

From her the Imperishable *Akshara* is becoming *Kshara*, the material world. Thus the Cosmos is being sustained by her[42].

Mantra 42 continues the doctrine of *Akshara* as manifested in the form of *Vāk* The transcendent *Vāk* as *Gaurī* stands in the midst of infinite oceans, *Samudrāḥ*, and their Waters are being fashioned into innumerable universes by the power of her striding or 'measuring out.' The cosmos is here conceived of as the process of oozing out or flowing forth or release of the streaming Waters (*adhi vikshavanti*).

From the point of view of symbolism two things are clearly stated in this Mantra, *viz.* the doctrine of *Akshara* and *Kshara*, and secondly that of the fourfold scheme of creation symbolised as the four directions of Space (*Pradisśaśchatasraḥ*)

The doctrine of *Akshara* and *Kshara* found so early in the Ṛig Veda is elaborated in the Upanishads and is the theme of a special chapter in the Gītā which explicitly states that *Kshara* is the world of Matter (*Ksharaḥ sarvāṇi bhūtāni*) and *Akshara* that of the Spirit (*Kūṭastho 'kshara uchyate*, Gītā 15.16). The Gītā formulates a two-fold definition of *Akshara*, *viz.* that *Akshara* is the same as the transcendent Brahman (*Aksharaṁ Brahma Paramam*, Gītā, 8.3), also called the higher *Avyakta* (*Avyakto'kshara ityuktastamāhuḥ paramāṁ gatim*, (8.21), and that *Akshara* is the individual Soul (*Kūṭastha*) which is also called *Avyakta* or *Pradhāna Prakṛiti* (Gītā, 8.18, 20). This distinction of the two categories of *Akshara* or *Avyakta*, the higher one referring to Brahman and the lower one to Jīvātman seems to be a

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[42] *Griffith*—From her descend in streams the seas of water; thereby the world's four regions have their being.

Thence flows the imperishable flood, and thence the universe hath life.

Wilson—From her the clouds shed abundant rain, and thence (the people of) the four quarters live : thence the moisture spreads (to the grain), and the universe exists.

later development of philosophical cogitation. Its preceding state is represented in the Upanishads where *Akshara* is identified with Para Brahman, transcendent Brahman, (*Aksharaṁ Brahma yat paramam*, Katha., Up. 3.2, *tadetadaksharaṁ Brahma*, Muṇḍ. Up. 2.2.2). The exposition of the *Akshara* doctrine by Yājñavalkya, to Gārgī is based on *Akshara* as the Supreme Being (BU. 3.8.8-11). In the Muṇḍaka the Rig Vedic statement of the cosmos taking its rise from *Akshara* (*tadviśvam upajīvati*, RV. 1.164.42) is repeated (*tadaksharāt saṁbhavatīha viśvam*, Muṇḍ. Up. 1.1.7); the Śvetāśvatara however, represents an intermediate stage in which the Ṛig Vedic conception of *Akshara* is invoked (*Ṛicho akshare parame vyoman* ŚV. Up. Ś 4.8) and also the later idea of the two *Aksharas* (*dve akshare Brahmapure tvanante*, ŚV. Up. 5.1).

The Ṛig Vedic doctrine of *Akshara* is clear, viz. the transcendent Being is *Akshara* who exists in the Highest Empyrean (*Parame Vyoman*) and from whom the whole world emanates, since he as the primeval ocean is the source of cosmic manifestation. The waters (*Salilāni*) referred to in Mantra 41 belong to the oceans mentioned in this Mantra. This is known as the *Ekārṇava* doctrine in the Purāṇas and referred to by several names in the Vedas, as the Waters of unfathomed depth (*gahanaṁ gabhīram ambhaḥ*, 10.129.1), the unknown mysterious Waters (*apraketaṁ salilam*, 10.129.3), Ocean (*Samudra*, 10.72.7), the Great Waters (*Bṛihatīrh āpaḥ*, which held the cosmos in their womb, 10.121.7). In Purāṇic terminology, this primeval Ocean is known as *Salila*, *Mahārṇava*, *Ekārṇava*, *Agādha Stabdha Salila* (Harivaṁśa, 3.10.34; Vishṇu P. 1.3.24; Matsya, 168.1-15). This doctrine in combination with that of Hiraṇyagarbha who is born out of the primeval Waters or the basic Mother-principle was later on crystallised in the well-known verse of the Manu Smṛiti which is repeated in several Purāṇas–*āpo nārā iti proktā āpo vai narasūnavaḥ, tā yadasyāyanaṁ pūrvaṁ tena Nārāyaṇaḥ smṛtaḥ*, Manu. 1.10; Brahma, 56.12, 60.25; Vāyu, 5.38; Udyoga Parva, 68.10). Three terms are to be distinguished here : *Nara* is the *Sahasraśīrshā Purushạ* or *Svayambhū*, the Self-existent Creator, *Nāra* is the Waters, *Āpaḥ*, the universal Mother-principle, also known as the Womb of Creation, *Yoniḥ*; and Nārāyaṇa is the same as Hiraṇyagarbha or *Apāṁ napāt*, the Babe produced by the Waters or Mothers of creation, which is the Life-principle or the Cosmos itself. An important question arises here as to what is the meaning of *Āpaḥ* and why the source of manifest Cosmos is so-called. The answer is given in the Brāhmaṇas, following a semantic etymology of the word *Āpaḥ* : She was co-extensive with all that exists and since by means of her the whole world was obtained, therefore the Mother-principle became *Āpaḥ* (*sedaṁ sarvam āpnod yadidaṁ kiñcha yadāpnot tasmād āpaḥ*, ŚB. 6.1.1.9; GB. 1.1.2; *Adbhnirvā idaṁ sarvam āptam*, ŚB. 1.1.1.14; 2.1.1.4; 4.5.7.7.). ' The Waters in the beginning were of the nature of *Salilam*; they desired :

how should we procreate ? (*Āpo ha vā idamagre salilamevāsa, tā akāmayanta kathaṁ nu prajāyemahi*, ŚB. 11.1.6.1). A similar etymology is given for *Salila* and *Samudra*. 'The Waters in the begining were called *Salila*'; (ŚB. 11.1.6.1) which is the same as *Sarira* (Ś.B. 7.5.2.18, *āpo vai sariraṁ*), so-called from the agitation or movement which arose in their midst, viz. the beginning of *manthana* or churning or *kshobha*, as the Purāṇas refer to it. Since the Waters ran to and fro, therefore they became *Samudra* (*tadyat* (*āpaḥ*) *samadravanta*, *tasmāt samudra uchchyate*, GB. 1.1.7; also TB; 2.2.9. 2-3, also JUB. 125.4).

The Purāṇas extend the imagery of the primeval Ocean as the Source from which the various floods, rivers, streams, pools, wells and other reservoirs are fashioned out which are the symbols of differentiated manifestation and which at the time of dissolution merge into One Ocean; all the divided units of creation are disrupted and are drawn together into a single Watery Mass (Harivaṁśa, 3.9. 1-2; see my book : ' Sparks From the Vedic Fire ', *Hiraṇyagarbha*, p. 16).

The second important reference is to the doctrine of Four Regions of Space. The four cardinal points have their basic foundation in the single centre which is Sūrya (*diśo vā asya* (*Sūryasya*) *budhnyā upamā vishṭhāḥ.*, ŚB. 7.4.1.14, VS. 13.3.). The unmanifest centre finds its extension in the *Svastika* of the Four Regions, each centre expands into a circumference based on a four-armed Svastika, that makes the perfect circle (*vṛitta chakra*) comprising four angles of 90° each (*chaturbhiḥ sākaṁ navatiṁ cha nāmabhiḥ*, RV. 1.155.6).

It seems that there is an inherent force in the Centre which undergoes four-fold manifestation and that basic rhythm is the *Chhandas* of the Centre, the four Regions of Space being only the manifest from of that Rhythm (*chhandāṁsi vai diśaḥ* ŚB. 8. 3. 1.12). The four quarters stand like the fensing sticks of the cosmic Yajña (*diśaḥ paridhayaḥ*, AB. 5.28, TB. 2.1.5.2). The Regions are like a garment which robe the Centre on all sides (*diśaḥ paridhānīya*, JUB. 3.4.2); but in fact there is no end to the limits of the four quarters (*aparimitā hi diśaḥ*, ŚB. 6.5.2.7). The regions are said to be the slings on which the different Lokas are hanging for support (*diśaḥ śikyam, digbhirbīme lokāḥ, śaknuvanti sthātum*, ŚB. 6.7.1.16). After all the *Diśaḥ* or the Regions of Space are only relative to a single Ākāśa, which is one of the five material elements and the Regions of Space belong to the category of material manifestation, as stated in the Ṛig Veda (*diśaḥ śrotrāt*, RV. 10.90.14, ŚB. 10.3.3.7, JUB. 2.2.4). The doctrine of the Four Regions as the exemplar of the four-fold Cosmos and all the tetradic patterns underlying it, e.g., four lokas, four devas, four priests, etc. (*chatushṭayaṁ vā idaṁ sarvam*). In the Rig Veda itself we find a frequent mention of the doctrine of the *Dik Svastika*, or the Four Regions of Space

(*paśchād uttarasmād adharāt purastāt*, RV. 10.42.11); *Savitā paśchātāt, savitā purastāt, savitottarāttāt, savitādharāttāt*, RV. 10.36.14). This was developed later on as a regular cult known as *Diśa Vrata*, the followers of which were known as *Diśa Vratika* (Pali : *Disa Vatika*, Niddesa. comm. on the Sutta Nipāta, referring to a list of 21 Vrata-suddhika cults, including the *Disa Vatika*). In the Āryaṇyaka Parva, Draupadī is compared to a *Vana-Devatā, Parvata-Devatā* or *Diśa Devatā* (*Vada satyaṁ vanasyāsya parvatasyāthavā diśaḥ devatā tvaṁ hi kalyāṇi tvāṁ vayaṁ śaraṇaṁ gatāḥ*, Āraṇyaka, 61.114). The adherence of this cult were required to observe a strict discipline of making adoration to the deities of the four quarters. The doctrine of the Four *Lokapālas* in Vedic literature, viz. Indra for East, Yama for South, Varuṇa for West and Soma for North. In Bhuddhist texts also we find an elaborate description of the Chatur Mahārājika Gods and there is no doubt that they were taken from very widely spread folk cults e.g., Dhṛitarāshṭra, chief of the Gandarvas, guardian of the East, Virūhaka, chief of the Kumbhandas, guardian of the South, Virūpāksha, chief of the Nāgas, guardian of the West, and Vaiśravaṇa, chief of the Yakshas, guardian of the North. In fact all these four were Mahārajas (Pali : (*chattāra mahārājāno*) or the great Yaksha Kings and their images at Bharhut are labelled as Yaksha. It appears that originally these folk-cults of the four Mahārāja Gods were of the highest antiquity and existed in the Vedic period also, when they were integrated as part of the single Mahad-Yaksha Doctrine, who stands at the centre of the world (*Mahad Yakshaṁ bhuvanasya Madhye*, AV. 10.7.38). The great Yaksha is compared to the erect stem of a mighty Tree, spreading its branches in all directions (*vṛikshasya skandha parita iva śākhāḥ*), and the four divine emanations of that single Mahat or universal Yaksha, are the tutelary deities stationed on the four sides. That Yaksha or Great Being also took his stand on the surface ofthe Ocean (*Salilasya Pṛishṭhe*) which is in accord with the doctrine of the Four Oceans, which through their outlets, send out four great rivers in the four directions. This is exactly the same conception as later on enunciated in that of the geography of the four continents (*Chaturdvīpī Bhūgola*) with Meru in the centre and Four Mountains, Four Rivers, Four Lakes, Four Forests, Four Deities ranged on the Four Terraces of the Golden Mountain. The same conception is illustrated on the abacus of the Saranath Lion-capital, showing the Four Great Animals (*Mahā Ājāneya Paśu*) a symbolical motif which is depicted in art right from Indus Valley upto our own times (for detailed references and explanation, of this fourfold motif, see my book : 'Chakradhvaja',). Thus the statement about the emanation of the Four Regions of Space from the Four Oceans appears to be part of a widely-understood symbolism both in cult and philosophy and valid for understanding the cosmological scheme accepted in the Vedas.

This Mantra like several others offers an indication of how the vast and varied language of symbolism was built in detail as a result of the generous acceptance of the religious beliefs and cults which already existed in the consciousness of the people and which in subsequent periods continued with all their warmth of popular beliefs and cult practices.

It is these scenes of living cult-worship that inspired the Ṛishis to formulate their cosmogonical thoughts in a language which was near to the people and well-understood in all its implications. The doctrine of *Pradiśaśchatasraḥ*, therefore, is significant and authenticated by an elaborate exposition in all the main Indian religions.



MANTRA 43

शकमयं धूममारादपश्यं विषूवता पर एनावरेण ।
उक्षाणं पृश्निमपचन्त वीरास्तानि धर्माणि प्रथमान्यासन् ॥

—ऋ० वे० १।१६४।४३॥

I saw far away the smoke of the cow-dung, smouldering at the mid-point, above than this (earth) and beneath that (heaven).

The Heroes have cooked the Spotted Bull ; such were the primeval Ordinances.[43]

This highly enigmatical Mantra raises four arguments :

(1) What is the meaning of the smoke from the cow-dung ? Who is the Cow whose cow-dung is burnt to produce the smoke ?

(2) Where this smoke is burning, as the Ṛishi saw it ?

(3) Who is the Spotted Bull ? why is he called Spotted ?

(4) What is the meaning of cooking the Bull ? And, Who were the Heroes who undertook the difficult task of cooking in the primeval ages ?

For a clear comprehension of the meaning of the Mantra an answer to these four questions should be offered as consistent with Vedic Cosmogonical Thought.

The central theme is the creation of Sūrya or the emergence of the blazing Orb of Fire, burning at primeval temperature which existed in the beginning of creation. This Fire was produced out of a smoky condition which preceded it and which stands for the simmering condition of the Waters or the Ocean which produced this Sūrya or Agni.

As we have several times pointed out, the Waters were the Mother principle who gave birth to Agni, therefore called *Apāṁ napāt*. Agni on earth is the same

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[43] *Griffith*—I saw from far away the smoke of the fuel with spires that rose on high o'er that beneath it.

The Mighty Men have dressed the spotted bullock. These were the customs in the days a foretime.

Wilson—I beheld near (me) the smoke of burning cow-dung; and by that all-pervading mean (effect), discovered the cause (fire) : the priests have dressed the Soma ox, for such are their first duties.

same as Sūrya in heaven, the latter being a thousandfold more powerful than Fire existing anywhere. The solar Orb has a temperature of 6000° cent., on the surface and two million degrees centigrade at the centre. This is what we learn from science today, but the ancient Seers regarded Sūrya as the manifest form of Divine Heat (*devaushnya*, Mait UP. 2.6—*etayorantarā devaushṇyaṁ prāsuvat yadaushṇyaṁ sa Purushaḥ atha yaḥ Purushaḥ so'gnirvaiśvānaraḥ*), Primeval Temperature (*Agraja Tapas*), Blazing Fire (*Abhīddha Tapas*), all of which are symbols for the principle of Agni on earth and Sūrya in heaven. The mighty Waters (*bṛihatīrāpaḥ*) conceived the Cosmos in their womb and produced Agni (*āpo ha yad bṛihatīrviśvamāyan garbhaṁ dadhānā janayantīr-agnim*. RV. 10.121.7). Sūrya also is said to be conceived in the Ocean from where it is thrown up by the world-building forces or powers in the divine ages or long durations of Time (*yaddevā yatayo yathā bhuvanānyapinvata atrā samudra ā gūḷhamā Sūryamajabhartana*, RV. 10.72.7). The techtonic process which resulted in the birth of the Sun is the object of this Mantra. It definitely postulates a stage anterior to the creation of Sūrya. It should be noted that Sūrya at the centre of this solar system is only one of the Sparks scattered about by the explosion in the primeval Sun and there are millions and billions of Suns in space and in the universes that form part of the cosmic system. The preceding stage is described as the smoky-condition in which the firy Sun began to appear by the convulsions or churning of the Ocean or the dynamic operations in the First Cause. As we would say in Vedic language, it was the region of the Universal or Parameshṭhī or the floods of creative laws or the Ocean of Ṛita, the Holy Order, which became agitated and from which individual centres were produced, of which Sūrya is an exemplar. What was the preceding condition like ? The answer is that it was filled with smoke. If allowed, we may call it a condition of gases, which in the Vedas is called *Nabhojāḥ* (10.123.2) and dark and dismal fog in the Purāṇas (*yathā chaikārṇavajale nīhāreṇa vṛitāntare, avyaktabhīshaṇe loke sarvabhūtavivarjite,* Harivaṁśa, 3.10.31).

In fact *Nabhas* and *nebulous* have a common linguistic origin and as used in the above Vedic Mantra, *Nabhoja* was that condition in which Water and Fire first came into contact (*imamapāṁ saṁgame Sūryasya*, RV. 10.123.1) and filled the whole Space with Matter in a nebulous form or the Primeval Smoke. Smoke is produced when there is moisture on the one hand and Fire on the other. Smoke is therefore a complete symbol of the combination of Fire and Water or as we might say, of the juxtaposition of the Plutonian and the Neptunist principles of Creation. In the words of the Ṛig Veda, we would designate them as the co-existence of *Āpo Bhūyishṭha* and *Agni Bhūyishṭha* principles (*Āpo bhūyishṭha ityeko abravīd agnir bhūyishṭha ityanyo abravīt*, RV. 1.161.9). This is also a Mantra of Ṛishi Dīrghatamas and in

simple words it means that the twin forces of Soma and Agni become operative at one point in order to create Sūrya or the Cosmos.

There are two questions now as to the identity of the Cow and the meaning of the Cow-Dung symbolism. Smoke is produced from moist fuel. That fuel was the cow-dung of the Cosmic Cow who is spoken of as Virāj, Aditi, Viśvarūpa, Kevalī, Kāmadughā etc. The Cow-Dung cake is only a symbol for the Fuel from which Fire was produced, viz. the Burning Bush or in plain words, Primordial Matter which was smelted in His Furnace by Brahmaṇaspati, corresponding to Vulcan, God of Fire and Metals in Greek Mythology.

The Cow produces two things, viz. Milk and Cow-Dung. Milk is the symbol of Prāṇa and Immortality as the Gift of Heaven, as Dīrghatamas himself has stated in Mantra 7. Cow-dung on the other hand is produced by the chemistry of *Apāna* and belongs to the mortal earth and was thus made a symbol of mortal Matter. The fodder eaten by the Cow processed by the force of Prāṇa become milk and by Apāna the cow-dung. It is the latter symbolism in all its bearings that is implied here.

Moreover, there is a reference here to the doctrine of *Pravargya*. Whatever is thrown out as refuse by an organic centre of Life after assimilation of food is called *Pravargya*. That portion of the food which is retained by the body for sustaining its own metabolism is called *Brahmaudana*, 'Food of Brahman'. In each Life centre, the rule of assimilation is associated with that of elimination. In the body or Brahman when the Life principle became operative, it produced both Prāṇa and Apāna, the Immortal and the Mortal,Devas and Bhūtas, Life and, Matter. It is the latter principles of Matter, Death, Apāna that are indicated by the Cow-Dung thrown out from the Body of the Universal Cow.

Wilson and Griffith differ in their translations of the word—*Ārāt*, the former taking it as 'near' and the latter as 'far'. In a sense both are right. If we look at the birth of the Cosmos from below, the regions of primeval creativity appeared tombe at the remotest distance, not so much spatially as in the depth of subtle causes. If we look at it from above, the process may be described as a near one to the centre from which cosmic activity emanates. As a matter of fact its right position is indicated in the second part of the Mantra, which refers to the doctrine of Para and Avara, already explained in Mantras 17-19. Avara is the lower world of Matter and Para is the higher world of spirit of what is described as Urdhva and Adhaḥ, or as Dyauḥ and Pṛithivī. The formation of Sūrya takes place somewhere between the two, that is known as *antariksha*, or in other words, the *Parāvara* region,

also known as the Ridge of Heaven, *Nāka Pṛishṭha*, or in modern terms, the Mid-most Point of Consciousness. It was the Vedic Rajas which draws its power from both Sattva and Tamas and is the same as Motion. This point of *Antariksha* or junction between Mind and Matter is the point of manifest Life, here called *Vishuvat*, which is the same as *Parāvara*, corresponding to the Equatorial Line between the northern and the southern hemispheres, controlling an equal distribution of Light and Darkness between them.

The meaning of the spotted Bull may now become clear from the above. The Bull is Sūrya, called spotted because it symbolises the two principles of Immortality. and Death : that which is below or on this side of Āditya is Mṛityu and that which is beyond is Amṛita (ŚB. 10.5.1.4). In Ṛig Veda (10.31.8), the Bull or *Ukshā* is identified with Sūrya (*Ukshā sa dyāvā pṛithivī bibharti . . . .*) *Sūryaṁ na harito vahanti*, Dyauḥ is the Father and Pṛithivī is the Mother and between them Sūrya is the Babe. The Spotted Bull symbolising Prāṇa (*āyaṁ gauḥ pṛishnirakramīdasadan mātaraṁ puraḥ/ pitaraṁ cha prayant svaḥ*, RV. 10.189.1). In Ṛig Veda Mantra 10.27.2, there is again mention of the 'cooking of the Bull' and in Mantra 10.27.17 to the cooking of the the fat Ram (*pīvānaṁ mesham apachanta vīrāḥ*). The Sun is called fat Ram. Both of these are symbols of Sūrya, who is at once the Spotted Bullock and the fat-dripping Wether (*pivānaṁ mesham apachanta vīrāḥ*). The Sun is called *Ukshā*, the Sprinkler, as it scatters its seed or fecundating energy through out the universe by means of its thousand rays. It is also referred to as the Spotted Stone placed as the fixed centre in the vault of Heaven. It is called Spotted because according to Ṛig Vedic cosmogony the Sun comprises the two-fold Rajas principle, *viz*. a black and a white one (*ahaścha kṛishṇam ahararjunaṁ cha vivartete rajasī*, RV. 6.9.11; also RV. 1.185.1, 10.37.3, 1.25.2, 8.43.6). The black Rajas stands for the principle of Rest and the white for Motion. The Sun is both a fixed centre and the first embodiment of orderly or rhythmic Motion. Prior to the creation of the Sun, all motion was riotous, disorderly and conflicting. Sūrya is typical of the twin principles of Yajña and Deva. 'Cooking of the Bull' is symbolical of the primordial aggregation of Matter to a focal point of manifestation under the stress and regulating ordinances of the Creator. These regulations are personified as the Host of Seven Maruts, here referred to as the Heroes, *Vīrāḥ*, In the great elemental conflict between Light and Darkness, i.e. the dark concealed regions of Varuṇa and the manifest Light-sipping powers of Indra, the latter emerges triumphant as Sūrya. This is the conflict-pattern symbolised as Indra-Vṛitra battle. God Indra as the supreme power of Light and Yajña is assisted in his victory by the Maruts. In a legend of the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, Manu is also said to have possessed a Bull which was devoured by the Asuras but ultimately recovered by the power of

Vāk. The asuric forces of Vṛitra which conceal for a time the Prāṇic powers of Indra, the four-horned Bull, must ultimately yield before the dynamic forces of creativity. This becomes visible in the emergence of Sūrya as the Spotted Bull placed between Father Heaven and Mother Earth on the cosmic plane and as the integrated principle of Light functioning as Prāṇa and Apāna in each individual centre (*antaścharati rochanāsya prāṇādapānatī/vyakhyan mahisho divam*, RV. 10.189.2). As the Atharva says, the universal Mother principle symbolised as the Waters produce the Bull or Sūrya for the sake of creation (*ati sṛishṭo apāṁ vṛishabhaḥ*, AV. 16. 1.1).

The Heroes are the symbols of the world-building forces which release the dynamics of creativity against the substratum of Rest. Modern idiom would choose to label them as the different manifestation of energy, whereas Ṛig Vedic symbolism puts them as the Heroic associates or companions of Indra. Indra is the One Hero, *Eka Vīra*, incarnating as *Vīrakas* or *Kumāra* of Purāṇic legends and it is essential that he should be assisted by the Seven Heroes or the Seven Maruts in his fight against the Vṛitras or the Asuric powers which keep the Cosmos in concealment or a Mountain Cave. These were the primeval ordinances, *Dharmāṇi Prathamāni* (cf. also RV. 10.90.16). The language of science and that of philosophy are twin sisters, expressing the same meaning but both are spell-bound by the profound mystery that yet remains to be fathomed.



MANTRA 44

त्रयः केशिन ऋतुथा वि चक्षते संवत्सरे वपत एक एषाम् ।
विश्वमेको अभि चष्टे शचीभिर्ध्राजिरेकस्य ददृशे न रूपम् ॥

—ऋ० वे० १।१६४।४४॥

The three deities or long matted locks (*keśin*) appear in ordered seasons, One of them deposits the germ in the Saṁvatsara.

One has a vision of the world with his powers. Of one the sweep is seen, but not his figure.[44]

This Mantra inculcates the doctrine of the Three Keśins, 'Three Hairy Ones,' or the 'Long-tressed Ones'. The arguments are as follows :

(1) What is Keśa, Hair or Matted Lock ?

(2) Who are these Keśins or Deities with long matted locks ?

(3) What is the meaning of their appearing in their due seasons ? (ṛituthā vichakshate)

(4) What is the significance of the 'depositing of the Seed' (*vapate*) in the Womb of Saṁvatsara ?

(5) Who is the Seer that maps out the universe with his intrinsic powers (*śachībhiḥ*) ?

(6) Who is that Keśin-deity whose sweep is seen but not the figure ?

These require to be explained in order to shed clarity on the obscurity of the Mantra.

Keśa or hair is the symbol of the refuse or dead matter thrown out by a living centre of Prāṇa. It indicates that the process of assimilation and elimination

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[44]*Griffith*—Three with long tresses show in ordered season. On of them sheareth when the year is ended.

One with his powers the universe regardeth; of one the sweep is seen, but not his figure.

Wilson—The three, with beautiful tresses, look down in their several seasons upon the earth; one of them when the year is ended, shears (the ground); one, by his acts, overlooks the universe; the course of one is visible, though not his form.

is functioning within the organism, or in other words that Agni as the Eater of Food, *Annāda*, is eating the food, *Anna*, and maintaining in health the rhythm or cyclic movement of the Life process. All kinds of impurities expelled by the metabolic fire within the body are of the same nature as Keśa which in Vedic Language was known as *Pravargya*. *Pravargya* is that portion of Yajña which is cut off from the centre (*atha yat prāvṛijyata tasmāt pravargyaḥ*, ŚB. 14.1.1.10. In fact the whole cosmos is Pravargya that has separated from its source of centre (*ime vai lokāḥ pravargyāḥ*, ŚB. 14.3.2.23; *Sarvaṁ vai pravargyaḥ*, ŚB. 14.2.2.46). Pravargya is the same as Vedic *Uchchhishṭa* and all the names and forms in creation are rooted in *Uchchishṭa* (*uchchhishṭe nāma rūpam*, AV. 11.7.1). We find the glorification of Uchchhishṭa as a full-fledged doctrine in the *Uchchhishṭa Sūkta* of the Atharva Veda (AV. 11.7.1-27). Pravargya or Uchchhishṭa is the same as the Surplus which by the intrinsic power of the centre as its rhythm becomes separated from the transcendent source and manifests as the visible cosmos. The Purāṇas carry further the idea of *Uchchhishṭa* or Keśa. In the imagery of Vishṇu-Nārāyaṇa as Keśava, the Deity of shaggy Hairs, each universe is like a hair on the body of Mahā Nārāyaṇa Purusha and therefore he is verily Keśī or Keśava. In the Pāśupata Śaiva ideology the same is stated about Śiva in the form of Dhūrjaṭi God, the Deity with massed matted locks on his head. All Matter or the Pañcha-Bhūtas represent the Pravargya portion of Brahman and they are the Matted Hair of Śiva in which the river of Life, Prāṇa-Gaṅgā descends and after roaming for a thousand years in quest of an outlet is released by Lord Mahādeva from his inscrutable mysterious labyrinths.

The matted locks and the head are interlinked symbols. As the hairs are cut, so the head of the sacrifice is also said to be detached and that became the Pravargya until a new head was restored. The meaning is that the cosmic Yajña is an overflow from the basic unmanifested Yajña of Prajāpati, the doctrine being that this Yajña is a surplus of that Yajña (*Yajñena yajñamayajanta devāḥ*). The manifst cast follows the unmanifest model. The two ends of the Bow snapped in tension and severed the head of Yajña-Vishṇu which became Pravargya, the cut-off portion, (*tasya*) (*makhasya*) (*vishṇoḥ*) *dhanurārtnirūrdhvaṁ patitvā śiro'chchhinat sa pravargyo'bhavat*, Tāṇḍya, 7.5.6); thus it was the self-immolation of the Yajña Purusha that has brought the cosmos into existence. It is the same idea as found in the Purusha Sūkta, *viz.* the transcendent Purusha himself becoming manifest transformed as the Cosmic Yajña Purusha. In the Tāntric ideology we find it in the form of Chinna-Masta. In the story of Daksha, the Presiding Genius of the Sacrifice, his head is severed and replaced by the head of the Goat or Aja, symbolising the unborn aspect of Prajāpati. Thus we find that the

basic concept of Keśa leading into several alleys of symbolisms pervades the entire canvass of Indian religious thought.

The problem now is about the meaning of Keśī. As Sāyaṇa has pointed out, the three gods, Agni, Vāyu and Āditya are the three Keśins. In fact the Śatapatha states this exegesis in the clearest terms : these gods named Agni, Vāyu and Āditya are Pravargya—*Agnir vāyurādityastadete Pravargyāḥ*, (ŚB. 9.2.1.21, 14.3.2.24). Separately each one of these three deities is Pravargya or a Keśī god (*ādityāḥ pravargyāḥ*, ŚB. 10.2.5.4; *esha vāyur u pravargyaḥ*, ŚB. 14.2.1.9; *agnihotraṁ vai pravargyaḥ*, ŚB. 14.3.2.26). When once the triadic pattern is conceived as Pravargya all other Vedic tetrads become implied in the symbolism; e.g. the three lokas which are the regions of the three deities are also a form of *Pravargya* : *ime vai lokāḥ pravargyāḥ*, ŚB. 14.3.2.23. Not only space but time also with it is Pravargya (*saṁvatsaro vai pravargyaḥ*, ŚB. 14.3.2.22). Thus both Space and Time are overflow from restful centre of the Creator becoming agitated for the sake of creative activity.

In fact, the one Keśī is Agni who is the primeval Prajāpati that existed in the beginning of all things. The whole cosmos is like a building of the Mahā Vedi or the great Fire Altar of Prajāpati, in the form of Agni. Agni then is the great Keśī as propounded in the Ṛig Veda itself (*Keśyagnim*, RV. 10.136.1). As is well-known one Agni becomes many and is spoken of as Agni, Vāyu and Āditya in the three lokas respectively. These are the three constituents of Vaiśvānara Fire, *viz*. the three worlds (*Viśva*) or lokas and their three controlling Heroes (*Narāḥ*). The lokas are also known as *purodhātā* and their three Prāṇic powers, *viz*. Agni, Vāyu and Āditya are known as the three *Purohitāḥ* (AB. 8.27); and these together constitute the cosmic Yajña. They are described in Vedic symbolism in many ways and were accepted as archetypal of the triune scheme of creation.

The third argument is about the appearance of the three Keśins in their respective seasonal order (*ṛituthā*). As soon as we think of a triadic pattern of the three lokas, that of the three seasons forming the Saṁvatsara or the revolving wheel of Time becomes implied in conjunction with it (*trayo vā ṛitavaḥ saṁvatsarasya*, ŚB. 3.4.4.17; 11.5.4.11). In fact, the Ṛitus or seasons as the manifest form of the Year are identified with the Metres or Time-Rhythm and also with the three Devas or the prāṇic powers of creativity. we have already explained the symbolical significance of the triadic cosmic rhythm under Mantra 24 while explaining the meaning of the three fuel sticks of Gāyatra Prāṇa and the same is applicable to the three Keśins and their respective triple seasons. Although like Agni's three brothers explained under Mantra 1, all the three seasons also exist in a single team at each and every one point of the Year's duration; still their potencies are variable in

manifestation and this rhythm is personified as the Ṛitus, the particular unit of Time in which the Ṛita form of Agni becomes Satya, i.e. transformed into an orderly system with a controlling centre is its *Ṛitu*; for each life-centre there is a different rhythm governed by its own time and space; hence each has its own Ṛitu or seasonal changes of birth, growth and decay or boyhood, youth and old age. Each individual, each animal and each plant is governed by its own triple seasonal changes and that is the significance of the statement that the three Keśin deities make their appearance in accordance with their seasonal timings.

The argument that one of the three Keśins deposits his seed in the Saṁvatsara requires to be clearly understood as this implies its distinctive features from those of the other two. Of Agni, Vāyu and Āditya that which controls the wheel of Saṁvatsara is Āditya himself. The wheel Of Time is revolving because of the potency of Sūrya or the energy of the Sun, transmitting to it its impelling force. We have taken the verb *vapati* in its natural sense of 'depositing the seed' or the germ which *sprouts* into the form of full-fledged Saṁvatsara coming into existence as the units of nights and days, months and semesters. The first and foremost Keśī is Sūrya whose rays are his hairs and who is the prototype and ultimate source of all the Fires of Yajña as the Basic Trayī Vidyā, and in whom the principle of Pravargya, Mahāvīra or Gharma is best exemplified : (*Ādityo vai gharmaḥ*, ŚB. 11.6.2.2; *Asau vai gharmo yo'sau sūryas tapati*, KB. 2.1). In fact Sūrya and Agni represent an identical principle, *viz*., Heat or Light, and both of them are types of simmering Boilers infuencing each other (*gharmā samantā, trivṛitaṁ vyāpatuḥ*, RV. 10.114.1), Agni being the *gharma* or *keśī* on Earth and Āditya in heaven.

The imagery of the seed deposited by Āditya in Saṁvatsara or the Time-wheel is carried further in the Brāhmaṇas stating that the Saṁvatsara again deposits its potent Germ in the womb of the Dawn, Goddess Ushas appearing as the recurrent unit of Time in the daily sky, and from the union of the two, is born Kumāra, the New Babe of Life or Prāṇa (*Prāṇaḥ prajānām udayatyesha sūryaḥ, saṁvatsaraḥ ushasi reto asiñchat sa saṁvatsare kumāro ajāyata*, ŚB. 6.1.3.8-10). Saṁvatsara is variously conceived as Bhūtapati, Gṛihapati and Prajāpati (*bhūtānāṁ cha patiḥ saṁvatsaraḥ*, ŚB. 6.1.3.8; *bhūtānāṁ*; *patir gṛihapatirāsīd ushāḥ patnī*, ŚB. 6.1.3.7; *Saṁvatsaro vai prajāpatiḥ*, ŚB. 2.3.3.18; AB. 1.1. etc).

The ideology behind the seed of Saṁvatsara takes us to the conception of *Bhuvanasya retaḥ*, the Seed of the Cosmos, explained under Mantra 37, which contains within it the triple potency of Mind, Life and Matter (*Manas, Prāṇa and Vāk*), each of which is a *Keśī*, as it is ceaselessly creating or sending out streams of its *Pravargya*. The thousandfold manifestations of the creator on the level of Mind, Life

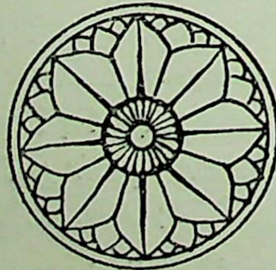
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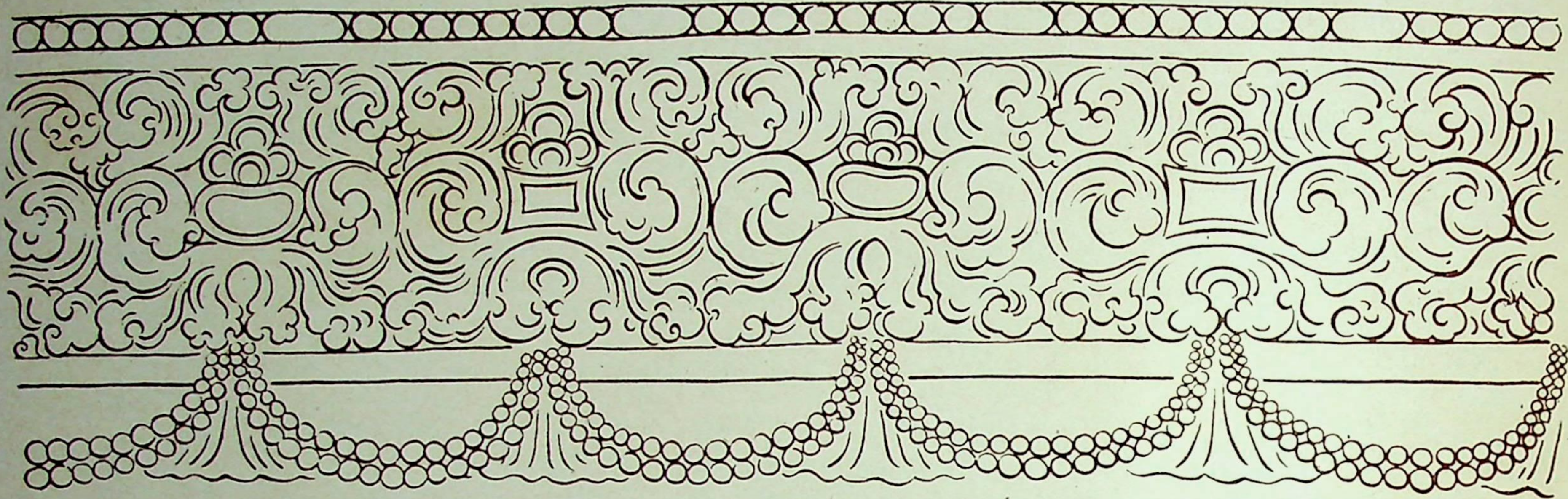
and Matter known as *tredhā sahasram* are the three infinite creative floods, which in later legends became the three-fold streams of the River Gaṅgā gushing out from the matted locks of Śiva.

The Keśin god who looks upon the created worlds or material manifestations is Agni, a name of Prāṇa incarnating in Matter. In Vedic symbolism, Agni , Vāk and Pṛithivī are interrelated and thus Agni is the deity whose vision becomes this cosmos. The universe is spoken of as the Eye of Agni.

In stating that the sweep (*Dhrājiḥ*) of the third Keśin is only experienced and not seen in manifest form refers to Vāyu as the Keśin God. From the symbolical point of view it is literally true that Agni and Āditya are visible to the eye and not so Vāyu; but from several other approaches also the statement holds good; e.g. Agni and Āditya are Prāṇa and Apāna which we witness as in-breath and out-breath and Vāyu is Vyāna, which is the Rock (*aśma prāṇa*) against which the two opposite Prāṇic forces collide and turn back to their respective activities.

Although in this Mantra there is an explicit reference to the three Keśins, one could postulate the ideology of one single transcendent Keśin who becomes three and then five and seven, just as in the case of other prāṇic forces. In fact the three Keśins would become seven if we take the last as representating the *Pañcha Bhūtas*. According to RV. 10.136.1, the number of Keśins is five, *viz*. the Pañcha Prāṇas and the five Mahā Bhūtas, i.e., Agni, *Visha* (Water), Jyotiḥ (Light), air and sky; again in Mantra 2, there is a reference to the wind-girdled sages, *vātaraśanā munayaḥ*, who typify this seven *śramaṇic* sages created by Prajāpati in the beginning, who did not participate in creation but retired as recluses (*nivṛittimārgī muni*).





Mantra 45—चत्वारि वाक् परिमिता पदानि

Four Steps of Speech



चतुष्ट्यं वा इदं सर्वम्

Fourfold Manifestation

MANTRA 45

च॒त्वारि॒ वाक् परि॑मिता प॒दानि॒ तानि॑ विदुर्ब्रा॒ह्म॒णा ये म॑नी॒षिण॑: ।
गुहा॒ त्रीणि॒ निहि॑ता॒ नेङ्ग॑यन्ति तु॒रीयं॑ वा॒चो म॑नु॒ष्या॑ वदन्ति ॥

—ऋ० वे० १।१६४।४५॥

Speech has been measured out in four steps. The Brāhmaṇas endowed with mental powers know them.

Three of them hidden in the cave do not move (*iṅgayanti*). The fourth part of Speech men speak.[45]

This Mantra inculcates the full-fledged doctrine of *Vāk* in its two-fold aspect, *viz.*, Parā Vāk and Aparā Vāk, Amṛitā Vāk and Martyā Vāk, Indrā Vāk and Indra-Patnī Vāk, the transcendent Speech existing in Parama Vyoma and the immanent Speech manifesting on the plane of Matter. From the Vedic point of view, *Vāk* is as important as *Brahman* (*yāvad Brahma vishṭhitaṁ tāvatī vāk*, 10.114.8) and both have a Thousand Majesties (*sahasradhā mahimānaḥ sahasram*) which means that their infinite nature and possibilities are beyond comprehension and measure and only a fraction of them descends in finite Matter. As a matter of fact, Brahman is Purusha and *Vāk* is Prakriti herself. *Brahman* is the Male and *Vāk* is the Female principle of cosmic manifestation (*yoshā hi Vāk*, ŚB. 1.4.4.4; and it is *Vāk* fecundated by the cosmic germ (*bhuvanasya retaḥ*) of the Self-existent Creator, (*Vāgiti strī*, JUB. 4.22.11 *Svayambhū*, that becomes the Mother or Womb of the Universe (*Vāg yoniḥ*, AB. 2.38).

The key to unlock the Vedic doctrine of Vāk is to understand that Vāk is the same as material Prakṛiti, Matter or the Pañcha Bhūtas of the five gross elements of Matter; each is distinguished by its four attributes (guṇa) and the attribute of Ākāśa is *Śabda* or *Vāk*. In creating a symbol for the Pañcha Bhūtas, the Ṛishis

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[45]*Griffith*—Speech hath been measured out in four divisions, the Brahmanas who have understanding know them.

Three kept in close concealment cause no motion ; of speech, men speak only the fourth division.

Wilson—Four are the definite grades of Speech : Those Brahmanas who are wise know them: Three, deposited in secret, indicate no meaning : men speak the fourth grade of speech.

conceived of as *Vāk* as the symbol *par excellence*. *Ākāśa*, although material, is nearest by imperishable nature to the *Akshara Brahman* which is the ultimate source and form of *Vāk*. Each syllable uttered by the human throat is produced in Space by the friction of air with other Bhūtas. This is rightly held by Indian metaphysicians to be the mortal Speech (*Martyā*) of limited possibilities (*parimitatarā*, ŚB. 1.4.4.7). This two-fold dichotomy of *Vāk* is of the same pattern as of Prajāpati himself (*Vāg vai Prajāpatiḥ*, ŚB. 5.1.5.6, 13.4.1.15), who is both manifest and unmanifest (*amūrta and mūrta*) and known and unknown (*nirukta* and *anirukta*, ŚB. 6.5.3.7); just as Prajāpati was This All, viz., the Universal (*sarvaṁ vai Prajāpatiḥ*, ŚB. 1.3.5.10), so is *Vāk* co-extensive with the whole creation (*Vāk vai Virāṭ*, ŚB. 3.5.1.34).

Vāk is the Majesty of Prajāpti (*Vāg vā asya Prajāpateḥ svo mahimā*, ŚB. 2.2.4.4). When desire entered Prajāpati to procreate he had a vision of Vāk as his counterpart and put his germ in her as the Womb or the Mother of the worlds (*Prajāpatirvā idamagra āsīt, tasya vāg dvitīyāsīt, tāṁ mithunaṁ samabhavat, sā garbhamādhatta*, Tāṇḍya, 20.14.2).

In the Ṛig Veda we do not find the word *Prakṛiti*, but the principle of *Vāk* completely represents the later conception of *Prakṛiti*. Just as *Prakṛiti* is the Mother and the Womb in respect of Purusha as the Father who puts his germ in the Female (*Bījaprada pitā*), so the same imagery is applied to *Vāk*, spoken of as the Mother or Female or Womb and her opposite principle as Prāṇa. In fact Prajāpti is identified both with the principle of Mind (*Manas*; *Prajāpatirvai manaḥ*, ŚB. 4.1.1.22) and also with the principle of Prāṇa (*Prāṇaḥ Prajāpatiḥ*, ŚB. 6.3.1.9, 8.4.1.4, *Prāṇo hi Prajāpatiḥ, Prajāpatiṁ hyevedaṁ sarvam anu prajāyate*, ŚB. 4.5.5.13). Mind and Life as the two unmanifest principles and Matter or *Vāk* as the manifest are the three constituents (*trivṛid rūpa*) of Prajāpati and so also of Prakṛiti symbolised as *Vāk* (*tryāvṛiditi Vāk*, Tāṇḍya, 10.4.6; *tredhā vihitā hi Vāk*, ŚB. 6.5.3.4, 10.4.5.2).

An important motif may be noted here. Once it is said that *Vāk* and *Manas* (Mind and Matter) from a divine pair (AB. 5.23, *Vāk cha vai manaścha devānāṁ mithunam*) and again that *Prāṇa* and *Vāk* are a pair (*Vak cha vai Prāṇaścha mithunam*, ŚB. 1.4.1.2).

Vāk is designated as *Prāṇapatnī* (Shaḍviṁśa, 2.9). Both statements are valid. When the Mind is the Bull and Vāk, the Cow, the offspring of this Bull-Cow Parents is Prāṇa. When Prāṇa is the Bull mating with the Cow, their Calf is Manas (*prāṇa ṛishabho mano vatsaḥ*, ŚB. 14.8.9.1) It has been well said since amongst the triple constitution of Self in the manifest body, both Mind and Prāṇa are creative i.e. putting their potency or seed in Matter or the Pañcha Bhūtas. When Mind is

stronger it is creating its Karma; when Prāṇa is stronger it is becoming effective in the form of its *saṁkalpa*. Actual Karma and its Śakti both form a pair (*Karma cha me śaktiścha me*, VS. 18.15). When we look at the potency of material manifestation, Prāṇa is the most excellent of all powers and *Vāk* consorting with it admits this (*ayaṁ Vasishṭha*-you are Vasishṭha; *sā ha vāg uvācha, ahaṁ vasishṭhāsmi, tvaṁ tad vasishṭho'si*, ŚB. 14.9.2.14). But when we think in terms of the unmanifested and the formless categories of existence which belong to the source, we speak of the Mind of the Creator as the main impelling force; but Vāk or the Pañcha Bhūtas stands as consort to both of them. It is the same phenomenon as of Daksha and Aditi, in which Daksha is once the son of Aditi and again Aditi is the daughter of Daksha where Aditi is *Vāk* and Daksha is *Prāṇa*.

The principle of Vāk as the female power must be present with each modality of manifestation; eg., the Vāk of Svayambhū is said to be *Parā Vāk* or *Satyā Vāk* also *Mithyā Svāyaṁbhuvī Vāk* (*Anādinidhanā nityā vāg utsṛishṭā svayaṁbhuvā, ādau vedamayī divyā yataḥ sarvāḥ pravṛittayaḥ*, Manu). In fact, Ṛik, Yajus, Sāma constitute the *Trayī Vidyā* which is also the nature of three-footed *Vāk* (ŚB. 10.5.1.5, *vāk tredhā vihitā, ṛicho yajūṁshi sāmāni*; see my 'Vedic Lectures' for the *Trayī* doctrine, pp. 21-41).

The Vāk or Parameshṭhī is called *Parameshṭhinī Vāk* (AV. 19. 9. 3). As explained under Mantra 41, she is the same as Gaurī (*Bos Gaurus*), her husband being called the Four-horned Gaura (RV. 4.58.2). She is also known as Mahishī, the Universal or She-buffalow (*Mahishī hi vāk*, ŚB. 6.5.3.4), same as *Rāshṭrī* (*ahaṁ rāshṭrī saṁgamanī vasūnām*, 10.125.3; *rāshṭrī devānāṁ nishasāda mandrā*, RV. 8.100.10.); both *Mahishī* and *Rāshṭrī* being synonyms of the Queen. She is also named as Sarasvatī (Goddess of the flood, or Lady of the lake), RV. 1. 3. 12 *Ambhṛinī*, daughter of *Ambhraṇa*, i.e. the Father rich in watery stores (*pitaraṁ purīshiṇam* RV. 1.164.12). She is the Vāk which is only in the nature of Sound, *Dhvanyātmikā*, as the sound of thunder. The region of Parameshṭhī is the dark descent of Varuṇa where Indra's power is ineffective and therefore, in *Parameshṭhinī Vāk*, the distinct syllabic sounds of vowels are not distinct. By an extension of the imagery the Brāhmaṇa writer refers to the Speech of human beings as *Nirukta*, syllabic and of the animals, birds and reptiles as non-syllabic, *anirukta* (ŚB. 4.1.3.16). In fact it is the higher doctrine of *Sphoṭa* associated with the *Parameshṭhinī Vāk*, in which the Meaning is all in all and reached only through imagination whereas in the syllabic *Vāk*, the relationship between *Śabda* and *Artha* becomes specific. The former is the Vāk of Prajāpati, merely a symbol as we find in the *Da-Da-Da* utterences of Prajāpati (Br. Up. 5.1.2-3) whose meaning was deciphered by the Asuras according to their will This form of *Vāk* is Silence which is present in the heart of all creatures (*vāgghṛidaya*, TB.

3.10.8.4). Prajāpati's Speech which is the Cosmos itself is Meaning to be decoded through human words, *Mānushī Vāk*. In the Ṛig Veda the doctrine of Four-fold Vāk is clearly stated in 8.100.10-11 where the higher Vāk is said be the Queen of all Gods (*rāshṭrī devānām*, same as *Vaiśvadevī*) and her principal feature is that although conceived as Speech she is beyond understanding by the human mind through the symbology of Word and Meaning (*Vāg vadanty avichetanāni*, RV. 8.100.10). This transcendent Vāk was the Mother of the Gods like Aditi is the Mother of Daksha, but for the sake of manifestation, all the Devas joined to create manifest Vāk, the Goddess existing in all creatures (*devīṁ vācham ajanayanta devāstāṁ viśvarūpāḥ paśavo vadanti*, 8.100.11). Vāk is four-footed like the four-footed Cow and she also has four teats, (*chatasra ūrjaṁ duduhe payāṁsi*, RV. 8.100.10) sprinkling food for the fourfold pattern of creation, symbolised as Ṛishis sustained by the teat named *Vashaṭkāra* as Pitṛis by the teat *Svadhākāra*, as Devas by the teat called *Svāhākāra* and as men sustained by the teat called *Hantakāra*, i.e. the udder producing the composite food of all the other three. The Ṛishis are symbols of the principle of Manas, the Devas of Prāṇa and the Pitṛis of Matter, all three of which become incarnate in the *Vāk* in the form of material beings.

The third stage of Vāk is that in Sūrya where it is known as *Bṛihatī*, *Sāvitrī* or *Indrapatnī* where Sūrya is the same as Indra (RV. 3.34.4—*Indraḥ svarshā janayann ahāni*; *Indraḥ, sūryam arochayat*, RV. 8.3.6). This is the Vāk in which the distinction of syllables, the foot-measures of metric rhythm, the seven forms of Speech (*Aksharеṇa mimate sapta vāṇīḥ*, RV. 1.164.24) and in which the manifestation of *Chatushpadī Vāk* appears for the first time. Sūrya is the greatest symbol of manifest creation. He is the same as Hiraṇyagarbha, Prāṇa, Indra or Nārāyaṇa. The Vāk in Sūrya is transformed into a Yajña (*Vāgvai yajñaḥ*, AB. 5.24; ŚB. 1.1.2.2, 1.1.4.11). It was in this modality of manifest creation that the gods also appear as the regulating principles of Yajña and in their mind they think of Vāk or switch their mental powers to the creation of manifest Matter (*Vāgvai devānāṁ manotā*, AB. 2.10; *yunajmi vāchaṁ saha sūryeṇa*, Tāṇḍya, 1.2.1). The Vāk of Chandramā is called Subrahmaṇyā being inspired by *Su Brahma*, which symbolises the principle of Waters or Soma as stated in the beginning of the Gopatha. Vāk is the triple form of Agni as existing in Svayaṁbhū, Sūrya and Pṛithivī, representing the three realities of Mind, Life and Matter; the other two categories of Parameshṭhī and Chandramā are symbols of Soma, all the five being mentioned in Ṛig Veda, 10.27.23 (*trayastapanti pṛithivīm anūpā dvā bṛibūkaṁ vahataḥ purīsham*). In Vedic formulation there are two types of Asuras, viz. in Parameshṭhī headed by Varuṇa and in Chandramā headed by Vṛitra. These are the two kinds of darkness, one in the unmanifest source and the other on the manifest level. As the three Agnis are symbols of light, or Devas, so the two

Somas are of Darkness or Asuras. Agni is Brahma and Soma is *Su Brahma*. Ultimately Vāk represents both of them (*vāg vai Brahma cha Su Brahma cheti*, AB. 6.3; *Vāg vai Subrahmaṇyā*, AB. 6.3).

The Vāk of Pṛithivī is styled as *Anushṭup*, which literally means the principle of stockpiling or the creation of Stomas, expressed by the numeration of three, nine, fifteen, twentyone, twentyseven and thirty-three, all together known as Vashaṭkāra, the principle of sextuplication by which Prāṇa incarnates in Matter and assumes the physical form. In Ṛig Veda 10.124.9, it is said that Indra in the form of a Golden Haṁsa representing the principle of Madhya Prāṇa follows after Anushṭup Vāk, which is the symbol of Matter (*anushṭubhamanu charchūryamāṇam Indram*).

Vāk is spoken of as the ocean (*Vāk vai samudraḥ*, AB. 5.16) where *Vāk* is the manifest world and *samudra* is its source in the universal; just as the ocean is inexhaustible, so is *Vāk* or the created Cosmos without beginning and, end and also boundless in space and infinite in its possibilities (*na vai vāk kshīyate na samudraḥ kshīyate*, AB. 5.16). The ocean is the same as the Waters (*Āpaḥ*) symbolising the Mother principle of formless manifestation. It is the primeval Ocean of Stillness, Silence and Equilibrium, but, for the sake of creation, the Waters become agitated and that form is known as *Sariram* (*Vāgvai Sariram*, ŚB. 7.5.2.53) literally that which comes into motion which is the same as *Sasarparī Vāk* in the Ṛig Veda (RV. 3.53. 15-16). It is the same as *Sarparājñī Vāk* i.e. Speech as Queen of *Sarpas* or the moving worlds (*Vagvai sarparājñī*, KB. 27.4). It is this agitated *Vāk* transformed into its rhythmic oscillations that has later measured out this expansive vast universe (*bṛihan mimāya*) or spread out the web of the cosmic Order (*Ṛitaṁ bṛihat*, VS. 12.14); (RV. 4.40.5). The Vedic word *Salilam* is the same as *Sariram* and literally *Samudra* also has an identical meaning.

Vāk as we have explained being the primordial Prakṛiti, she is spoken of as of the Order of the Thousand (*Vāg vā eshā nidānena yat sāhasrī gauḥ, tasyā etat sahasraṁ vāchaḥ prajātam*, ŚB. 4.5.8.4). In Vedic idiom a Thousand is the symbol of the Infinite World of the Devas and Hundred of the finite world of men, In fact, both the universal and the individual are constituted of three entities, viz. Mind, Life and Matter and each one of them is said to be of the Order of *Sahasra*, so that there are basically three Thousands. The first is the principle of Veda (*Veda Sāhasrī*) which is the same as Mind or Knowledge. The second is *Loka Sāhasrī*, the same as the world of Prāṇic Energy; the third is *Vāk Sāhasrī*, the same as the world of Matter or *Pañcha-Bhūtas* (RV.—*tredhā sahasraṁ vi tadairayethām*, 6.69.8; *tadāhuḥ kiṁ tat sahasramitīme lokā ime vedā atho vāgiti*, A.B. 6.15).

We are familiar with the legend of the Three Birds (*Trayaḥ Suparṇāḥ* AV. 18.4.4) which in the form of the triple rhythm of *Gāyatrī*, *Trishṭup* and *Jagatī* brought from Heaven the Immortal Soma for mortal humans of this Earth. This conception agrees with that of *Chatushpadī Vāk* whose Three Feet correspond to the Threefold scheme of the Cosmos, viz. the Three Lokas, Three Devas, Three Guṇas, Three Fires, etc.

Vāk is symbolised as the Bird (*Vāgeva Suparṇī*, ŚB. 3.6.2.2). If the Great Being, Purusha be conceived as *Mahā Suparṇa*, *Vāk* or Nature, the Infinite Mother of all creatures, was truly conceived in the imagery of a Bird with its two wings symbolising the basal dualities of creation. The two wings are perfect types of the Prāṇic movements of contraction and expansion (*samañchana* and *Prasāraṇa*; *Prāṇo vai samañchana prasāraṇa*, ŚB. 8.1.4.10; VS—*pretya etyai sa chāñcha pra cha sāraya* 27.45). Prāṇa and apāna are the two wings of the fluttering Bird or the individual soul (*bhoktā suparṇa*, RV. 10.189.2), the light-sipping warbler of the celestial regions, who is yet 'true to the kindred points of heaven and home.' Such is *Vāk* Suparṇa, the principle of Motherhood or Infinite Nature symbolised as Pṛithivī. Vāk is identified with *Tvashṭā*, the Divine Fashioner of Forms (*Vāgvai Tvashṭā Vāgghīdaṁ sarvaṁ tāshṭīva*, AB. 2.4). It is a correct statement about *Vāk* which gives concrete form to the ideas or thoughts of the mind and is therefore spoken of as the channel through which the mind gushes forth in floods (*tasya manasa eshā kulyā yad vāk*, JUB. 1.58.3). The imagery of the *Vāk* compared to a Cow is an accepted symbolism of the Ṛig Veda and the Purāṇas. All the Devas have their being in *Vāk* (*Vāgiti sarve devāḥ*, JUB. 1.9.2; *Vāgeva devāḥ*, ŚB. 14.4.3.13); (*Vāg rāshṭrī devānām*, RV. 8.100.10; *devīṁ vācham ajanayanta devāḥ*, 8.100.11). All that has been said with respect to four-footed *Gaurī* or *Parameshṭhinī Vāk* in Mantra 51 holds good to the four-footed *Vāk* in this Mantra. Originally *Vāk* was one-footed (*ekapadī*) or which is the same as stating that she was footless (*apadī*), since there can be no movement with one foot. She as transcendent *Vāk* (*parā*), of a Thousand syllables (*SahasrākSharā*) becomes this triple cosmos and thus becomes four-footed (*chatushpadī*). As Footless Mother, she conceives the Footed-Calf (*padvantaṁ garbham apadī dadhāte*, RV. 1.185.2), the Cow at rest bears the Calf that is moving (*acharantī charantam*, RV. 1.185.2).

The One-footed becomes Two-footed; the Two-footed becomes Three-footed; then the Three-footed becomes the Four-footed (*ekapād bhūyo dvipado vi chakrame dvipāt tripādamabhyeti paśchāt chatushpādeti*, RV. 10.117.8). As stated above, the One-footed is the Absolute, beyond the categories of Time and Space; the Two-footed one is the creative principle of growth in its twofold aspects of *Vāmana* and *Virāṭ* and many other dual patterns as Aditi, and Diti, Akshiti and Kshiti, Amṛita

and Mṛityu, Deva and Manushya, Prāṇa and Bhūta, etc. The *Tripād* pattern is both in the cosmos and also in the unmanifest Prajāpati who is the source of the manifest. If we look at the world, it is triadic; if we look to its source in the creator, the ultimate cause also had the three-footed potentiality emanating as the trinitarian worlds. It is from this point of view that Purusha is also called *Tripada* (*Tripād ūrdhva udait Purushaḥ*, RV. 10.90.4). In that statement the cosmos becomes one foot and the immortal transcendent Being as three-footed (*pādo'sya viśvā bhūtāni, tripādasyāmṛitaṁ divi*, RV. 10.90.3). In the present Mantra also the ratio between the Unmanifest and the Manifest is stated as Three : One, saying that the Three Steps of the Cow are concealed in the Cave (*trīṇi guhānihitā*) and they are not visible in the form of movement (*neṅgayanti*) but the fourth foot of the Cow has become tangible in the uttered Speech of all creatures (*turīyaṁ vācho manushyā vadanti*). That which is true of Śabda or Vāk is also true of the other elements of gross Matter also which existed in the beginning in their subtle source. In simple word, it is the law of the unmanifest cause and its manifest effect being in the relation of three is to one or threefourths and one fourth. In the second quarter of the Mantra there is a reference to the wise Brāhmaṇas (*Brāhmaṇā ye manīshiṇaḥ*). This seems to point to the philosophers who had cogitated on the meaning (*vijñāna*) of the Vedic doctrines. It is they who participated in the Vidatha assemblies or learned discussions held at the time of the Yajñas (Cf. *yena karmāṇyapaso manīshiṇo yajñe kṛiṇvanti vidatheshu dhīrāḥ*, VS. 34.2). Indeed they were the real thinkers and metaphysicians who laid the foundations of Vedic Vijñāna and it is they who formulated new doctrine and evolved new definitions and symbolical terminology to convey basic cosmogonical ideas. The tradition of the *Manīshī Brāhmaṇas* continued upto the time of the Upanishads, where they seem to be identical with Brahma-Vādins, Brahma-Vidaḥ, Triṇāchiketaḥ, Vijñānavān, etc. (Kaṭh Up. 3.1-6). They were actuated in their search for knowledge by the approach of the Jñāna, i.e. probing into the deeper meaning of words and reaching the end of the journey (Cf. *Vijñāna sārathih..so'dhvanaḥ pāramāpnoti*, Kaṭh Up. 3.9).

In the Upanishadic age a new algebraic term was evolved for these Brāhmaṇas who were knowledgeable about Brahman. They were known by the simple title of *Jña*, the Comprehensors (*Jñaḥ kāla-kālo guṇi sarvavidyāḥ*, S.U. 6.2, 16-17). There were three categories of teachers as stated by Yāska and Pāṇini. He who knew one Vidyā was known as *Veditā* or *Ekavidya*; he who knew more than one or several sciences was called *Bhūvo Vidya* and he who was master of all Vidyās was known as *Sarva-Vidya* with the title of Brahma (*Brahma sarva vidyāḥ sarvaṁ veditum arhati*, Yāska, NA. 1.1.8). In the Upanishad just quoted *Sārva Vidva* is the epithet of *Jña*, and Patañjali informs us that they were illustrious Brāhmaṇas who comprehended

the real meaning of the Texts and the mystery of Brahman (*jñānāṁ Brāhmaṇānām*, Bhāshya, 4. 1.11, Kielhorn Ed. Vol. II. p. 190, *Jñānāṁ Brāhmaṇānām apatyaṁ iti*). They were considered to be true knowers of *Vāk* (*Vāgvid*). Patañjali has in fact commented on this Mantra in the Mahā Bhāshya as being applicable to the grammatical *Vāk* in which the four kinds of words include nouns, verbs prefixes, and particles (*chatvāri padajātāni nāmākhyātopasarganipātāścha manasa īshiṇo manīshiṇaḥ*). Yāska rightly designates the Mantra as a Riddle (*Pravahlita*) susceptible of more than one meaning, according to the context.

In the later philosophies of Sphoṭa-Vāda as developed by the Grammarians, this doctrine of four-fold Vāk was completely accepted as their bed-rock of their doctrine and the four modifications of Vāk were given new names as Parā, Paśyantī, Madhyamā and Vaikharī; the last one, Vaikharī is the human speech uttered in syllable which is transitory, lasts only so long as it is uttered by the mouth (*indriya-nityaṁ vachanam audumbarāyaṇaḥ*, Nirukta, 1.1). These philosophers were known as *Kārya Sābdikāḥ*, but there were others who correctly represented the Grammarians' point of view and believed in the eternity of the Word—*Naitya Sābdikāḥ*. They in fact were exponants of the doctrine of *Parā Vāk* and of its two other modalities as Paśyantī and Madhyamā. The first Parā Vāk being the same as the Vāk of Svayambhū called eternal, Nityā and Satyā. The second category of Paśyantī Vāk corresponds to Parameshṭhinī, Gaurī or Ambhṛiṇī Vāk of the Vedic times. It is this with which Ṛishi Dīrghatamas was endowed as the Sightless Seer whose vision was unthwarted in the Long Darkness or the mystery of creation.

The third stage is that of Madhyamā Vāk where the meaning becomes differentiated but retains its unmanifest form on the level of the Mind. This is so-called as it is intermediate between Paśyantī and Vaikharī. It should be clearly noted that Parā is the stage corresponding to Turīya state of consciousness, described in the Māṇḍūkya Upanishad. Its transcendence is untouched by any predication about its nature. It is Absolute like Brahman. In the second state of Paśyantī or Parameshṭhinī all the meanings are present in the universal in an undifferentiated form. In the third stage of Madhyamā the meanings are cast in separate moulds of thought. It is the most mysterious of world of ideas of which the concrete symbol is the human mind symbolised as Haṁsa. Its source in the Universal is conceived as the Lake of Brahma (*Brahmasaraḥ*; Raghuvaṁśa, 13.60), which is unmanifest (*Avyakta*) and the source of individuated intelligences (Buddhi). What in the Purāṇas is known as Brahma Chara is the same as the Ṛita-Ocean of Parameshṭhī where resides Parameshṭhinī Vāk, the Ambhṛiṇī daughter of the Universal Mind who prides in calling herself higher than this earth and higher than heaven (*paro divā*

para enā prithivyā), such being her majesty (*etāvatī mahinā saṁ babhūva*). That is the Vāk whom both gods and men are craving; that is for descent on the level of the Spirit and of Matter (*jushṭaṁ devebhir uta mānushebhiḥ*, RV. 10.125.5). The speech produced by vibrations of air in the hollow of the throat in the form of articulate sound is named Vaikharī—*viśesheṇa khaṁ ākāśaṁ rāti dadātīti*. The Alaṅkāra-Kaustubha as cited by the Śabda Kalpa Druma states the doctrine a little more explicitly explaining Parā Vāk as the one which is existent in the *Mūlādhāra*; Paśyantī as the Vāk in the *hṛiddeśa* (*paśyantī hṛidayagā*), which is the same as Hṛidaya, the divine immortal region or source inclined towards manifestation, which corresponds to the universal; the *Madhyamā Vāk* as that which belongs to the individual Mind (*Buddhiyuṅ Madhyamā khyāta*); the fourth articulate sound, Vaikharī bides in the human throat or organ of articulation (*vaktre vaikharī*).

Parā and Paśyantī Vāk are realised only by the Yogins in the state of complete universalisation, *Samādhi* and the Madhyamā and Vaikharī by the individual mind according to the power of their minds. In medieval Indian aesthetics, the doctrine of four-fold Vāk was given a new statement in which Parā corresponds, to Rasa, Paśyantī to Artha, Madhyamā to Chhandas and Vaikharī to Śabda (Of. 'Rāma Charita Mānasa-'varṇānām arthasaṁghānāṁ rasānāṁ chhandasāmapi). All these four are divine creation or forms of the divine Mother, permeating the two worlds of Word and Meaning or Matter and Spirit.



MANTRA 46

इन्द्रं मित्रं वरुणमग्निमाहुरथो दिव्यः स सुपर्णो गरुत्मान् ।
एकं सद् विप्रा बहुधा वदन्त्यग्निं यमं मातरिश्वानमाहुः ॥

—ऋ० वे० १।१६४।४६॥

They call him Indra, Mitra, Varuṇa, Agni, and he is the heavenly Winged Bird.
The sages speak of the One by many names : they call it Agni, Yama, Mātariśvan.[46]

This Mantra may be said to be the quintessence of Vedic ontological speculation. It is the Thread that unites *Deva-Vidyā* with *Brahma Vidyā*. The Devas are many representing the innumerable celestial and earthly powers (*divya*, *pārthiva*, *viśva, indriya*, VS. 7.3). One may really create as many Devas as one would like. Their names and forms depend on human imagination. It is the quality of mind which creates the Devas for the mind is defined as *devavāhana*, the divine vehicle, or a pack-animal on which each god rides according to his choice. Each creature or human being with an individual mind is an animal on which a Deva loves to be transported. Anthropologically, human mind from the beginning of civilisation has been casting images of devas in thought-moulds of different climes and times. Even in the animistic form of worship the whole nature comprising the plant, animal and human kingdoms and even the inanimate worlds of rivers, mountains, stars has been conceived of as the numberless manifestations of some Spirit. He is the one *Yaksha* in the centre of the universe (*mahad yaksham̐ bhuvanasya madhye*, AV. 10. 7.38) and all the gods and goddesses, spirits, and gnomes, *ghouls* and as many godlings and tutelary deities as may be found in the mythologies of nations are linked to this One Great Spirit like the thousand branches to the stem of a tree(*tasmiñ chhrayante ya u ke cha devā, vṛikshasya skandhaḥ parita iva śākhāḥ*, AV. 10.7.38). The history of mythology and religions abounds in lost Gods and obscure cults but that does not matter in the least so far as the Doctrine is concerned, viz., the Single Supernal

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[46] *Griffith*—They call him Indra, Mitra, Varuṇa, Agni, and he is heavenly noblywinged Garutmān.

To what is one, sages give many a title; they call it Agni, Yama, Mātariśvan.

Wilson—They have styled (him, the Sun), Indra, Mitra, Varuṇa, Agni, and he is the celestial well-winged Garutmān, for learned priests call one by many names as they speak of Agni, Yama, Mātariśvan.



Mantra 46—प्रजापति-सुपर्ण Prajāpati-Suparna

Sun shining with its thousand rays, the one blazing fire shooting innumerable sparks' the one imperishable source of energy exploding into a thousand radiations, the one, primeval ocean flooding into a thousand stream. This principle of unity in cosmic multiplicity constitutes the doctrine applicable both in the realms of Matter and Spirit. All material manifestations originate from a common source and bear diverse names and forms. Similarly all the gods like the rays of the Sun find their unity in the source which is one named diversely as *Brahman*, *Prajāpati*, *āja* (the Unborn Creator), *Avyaya* (the Unmodified Spiritual Principle), A*kshara* (the Imperishable). Indeed this Mantra shows the way to the composition of the *Sahasra Nāma Stotras* so pupular in Sanskrit literature. Each name of the deity is like an offering and the repetition of names is specifically termed a *Vāg-Yajña* in the Bhīshmastava-rāja.

There is however the distinction in the approach of the ordinary minds and of those who are in possession of real knowledge or the Sages, *Viprāḥ*. It is only they who can pierce through the diversity of external forms and see the unity of Prāṇa. Both *Nāma* and *Rūpa* have been called Yakshas and mere appearances (*Nāmarūpe ha vai mahatī abhve mahatī yakshe*, ŚB. 11.2.3.4-5); but behind the apparitional forms there is a substance or reality which is Brahman. This was the creed of Vedic metaphysics as stated in so many ways, e.g., the purport of this Mantra is repeated elsewhere (*yo devānāṁ nāmadhā eka eva taṁ saṁpraśnaṁ bhuvanā yantyanyā*, RV. 10.82.3). The whole Vedic pantheon, extensive as it is, is governed by this spiritual law, viz. the transcendence of the One principle and the immanance of many. The one becomes the Many. This spiritual doctrine is the Life-breath of Indian metaphysics and religion which has kept the mighty tree of thought with its dense foliage of creeds, dogmas, faiths and cults ever green and luxuriant. The truth behind the inspiration of Dīrghatamas has been reiterated times and again by the greatest minds of India. The pantheistic unity of Brahman amongst all the Devas is as a natural corollary of the doctrine transferred to each Deva also, eg., Indra is the highest One deity and all other gods are his form; the same may be said of Agni, of Mitra, of Varuṇa and of the World-Pillar, Skambha, of the Cow *Virāj*, of the Bull Ukshā, of the stream of Life, *madhukasha*, of the Earth Goddess, of the Tree and of each and every deity. When a *devatā* is placed at the centre of his Maṇḍala, he appears to be the focus of all other deities and no question of superiority and inferiority is brought into the argument. What is always germane to the conception of the deity is that he is both identical with the Absolute and also has a relative aspect. This is the core of the doctrine and is present in this Mantra also. The words *Ekam* and *Bahudhā* are symbols of this two-fold idea.

A pertinent question may be raised here as to the evolution of the idea contained in the Mantra in place and time. To us it appears that the belief in the existence of

the Supreme Self or Brahman or the Transcendent one (*Kimapi svidekam*) existed side by side with a belief in many gods or a large pantheon spread in the popular cults. We find reference in Bhuddhist, Jain and Brāhmaṇical literature to a number of folk-cults; e.g., *Vṛiksha-Maha, Nadī-Maha, Sāgara-Maha, Avaṭa-Maha, Dhanur-Maha, Brahma-Maha, Yaksha-Maha, Nāga-Maha, Rudra-Maha, Vaiśravaṇa-Maha, Vishṇu-Maha, Skandha-Maha, Koṭṭakiriyā-Mahā, Stūpa-Maha, Chaitya-Maha, Indra-Maha, Gaṅgā-Maha, Bhūta-Maha, Darī-Maha*, etc., (for a detailed description of these folk-cults, see my book : 'Ancient Indian Folk-Cults'). This motley crowd of deities form the popular pantheon from as early a time as the higher deities of the Ṛig Veda itself and there was open give and take in the idealisation and concretisation of the nature and form of the various gods. The masses were inclined to worship the gross form of the deity whereas the Sages or men of wisdom perceived the underlying unity and sang their holy praises in adoration of the Supreme Divinity. These two currents coexisted through the ages. We may take one example, viz. *Yaksha*. In the Ṛig Veda itself we find reference to *Yaksha* shrines (RV. 4.3.13, *Yaksha sadma*), to Agni as the Lord of *Yakshas* (*yakshasyādhyakshama*, RV. 10.88.13), to Mitra and Varuṇa as exceeding in powers and duty, the *Yakshas* whose worship prevailed amongst the ignorant people (RV. 7.61.5, 5.70.4). The *Yaksha* was also considered to be of beautiful form (*yakshadṛiśo na śubhayanta-maryāḥ*, RV. 7.56.16), a belief that continued upto classical times (Āraṇyaka Parva, 50.13). In the VS. 34.2 the mind is compared to a miraculous *Yaksha* and in the Atharva *Yaksha* is called *Mahad Brahma* and his resplendant abode as *Brahma Pura* or *Aparājitā Purī* (AV. 10.2.29-33; 10.8.43). The widespread worship of Brahma as *Yaksha* is found in the Kena Upanishad by asking people to rise above Yaksha worship and to take recourse in the knowledge of Brahman (*Tadeva Brahma Tvaṁ viddhi, nedaṁ yadidam upāsate* Kena Up. 1.5-9). In the Atanātiya Suttanta, Indra, Mitra, Varuṇa, Agni and other Vedic Gods are included in the list of *Yakshas* and there is no doubt that they were worshipped as such in the folk-religion; even Pāṇini includes Varuṇa and Aryamā in a list of *Yakshas* after whom children were named by their parents (Sūtra, 5.3.84) and this Sūtra also includes names of three popular *Yakshas*, including *Viśāla* who was the tutelary deity of Vaiśālī. In the Ādiparva there is a high-flown Stotra for Indra in which he is called M*ahat* and *Bhūta*.

The *Tadeva* doctrine referred to in the Kena Up. in respect of Brahma is found in the Yajur Veda as applied to Agni, Āditya, Vāyu Chandramā, Śukra, Brahma, Āpaḥ and Prajāpati (VS. 32.1) which surely presents an elaboration of the same doctrine as inculcated by Dīrghatamas in the present Sūkta. This knowledge of the underlying unity of the transcendent principle of Brahman was naturally cul-

tivated amongst the wise Sages and Seers and transmitted by them with inspired feeling and eloquence to their pupils and thus, in course of time, it came to be designated as an Upanishad. It is thus evident that the question of tracing a priority or chronological sequence is inadmissible so far as the available evidence in the Saṁhitās and later literature is concerned.

The principle of *Ekam* and *Bahudhā* is applied to Indra, Agni, Sūrya, Ushas and several other deities (RV. 8.58.1-2, *yamṛitvijo bahudhā kalpayantaḥ*; *suparṇaṁ kavayo vachobhir ekaṁ santaṁ bahudhā kalpayanti*, 10.114.5).

In reviewing the contents of this Mantra our attention is focussed on the doctrine of *Vāk*, on the lower level of words and the higher level of meaning, about which we have mentioned under Mantra 45. The word as a name is merely an outer symbol and there can be no finality as to its absolute connotation, since all words as human institutions are mortal and subject to change, but the meaning is eternal. As such the idea of divinity alone according to the mental faith of the worshipper is of value and the names and forms given to the Devas are phenomenal and ephemeral.

In this Mantra Agni is repeated twice, once as the Fire in Heaven called Sūrya and again as the Fire on Earth called Agni. Garutma-Suparṇa was the same as Sūrya mentioned as the Beautiful Bird in Mantra 7 or as the Golden Bird in Mantra 47 (*Harayaḥ suparṇāḥ*) or as the Giant Divine Bird in Mantra 52. In fact it was an extensive Vedic doctrine treated at length in RV. 10.114 and it was much elaborated in the form of legends known as the *Sauparṇākhyāna*, the Suparṇa Saga of the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, as amplified in the legend of Garuḍa in the Ādi Parva. The Life principle itself was identified as the Golden Bird (*hiraṇyapakshaśakuni*) or as Haṁsa who was no other than Indra according to the discerning wisdom of the sages (RV. 10.124.9—*sayujaṁ haṁsam······Indraṁ ni chikyuḥ kavayo manīshā*). The idea of the universe as the outcome of cosmic pulsation is brought out completely in the imagery of the flapping of the two wings by the Great Bird soaring on a flight of a Thousand Days. Just as the Male God was conceived as a *Suparṇa*, the Female Mother Principle was spoken of as *Suparṇī* and the cosmic rhythm at three levels is exemplified as the three Metres, viz. Gāyatrī, Trishṭup and Jagatī about which Dīrghatamas has already spoken in Mantras 23-25. The Ṛishi was certainly familiar with the *Sauparṇākhyāna* on the one hand, referring to a single *Suparṇa* and to the *Tri-Suparṇa* doctrine based on the conception of the three primeval Birds. (see also mantras 20 and 22).

MANTRA 47

कृष्णं नियानं हर॑यः सुपर्णा अपो वसा॑ना दिवमुत्प॑तन्ति ।
त आव॑वृत्रन् त्सद॑नादृतस्यादिद् घृतेन॑ पृथिवी व्यु॑द्यते ॥

–ऋ० वे० १।१६४।४७॥

The Path is dark. The Birds are golden-coloured. Robed in Waters they fly upto heaven.

From the region of Ṛita they are coming again and again. The Earth is moistened with *Ghṛita*.[47]

The Mantra is a difficult one couched in a highly symbolical style. It formulates the doctrine of three modalities, viz. *Ṛita*, *Suparṇa* and *Pṛithivī*. The following arguments may be stated as arising from the words of the Mantra :

(1) What is the Dark Path or Way for access to dark region ?

(2) What are the Golden Birds ?

(3) Why are they stated to be robed in Waters ?

(4) Which is the heaven where they are assembling ?

(5) What is *Ṛita-Sadana*, the Region of the Cosmic Order, viz., *Ṛita* or *Yajaña* ?

(6) What is the meaning of *Ghṛita* or Butter ?

(7) What is the symbolism of Pṛithivī and what is the significance of it being moistened or sprinkled with Butter ?

These seven points have definite symbolical connotation and are interrelated. The solution to the problems is as follows :

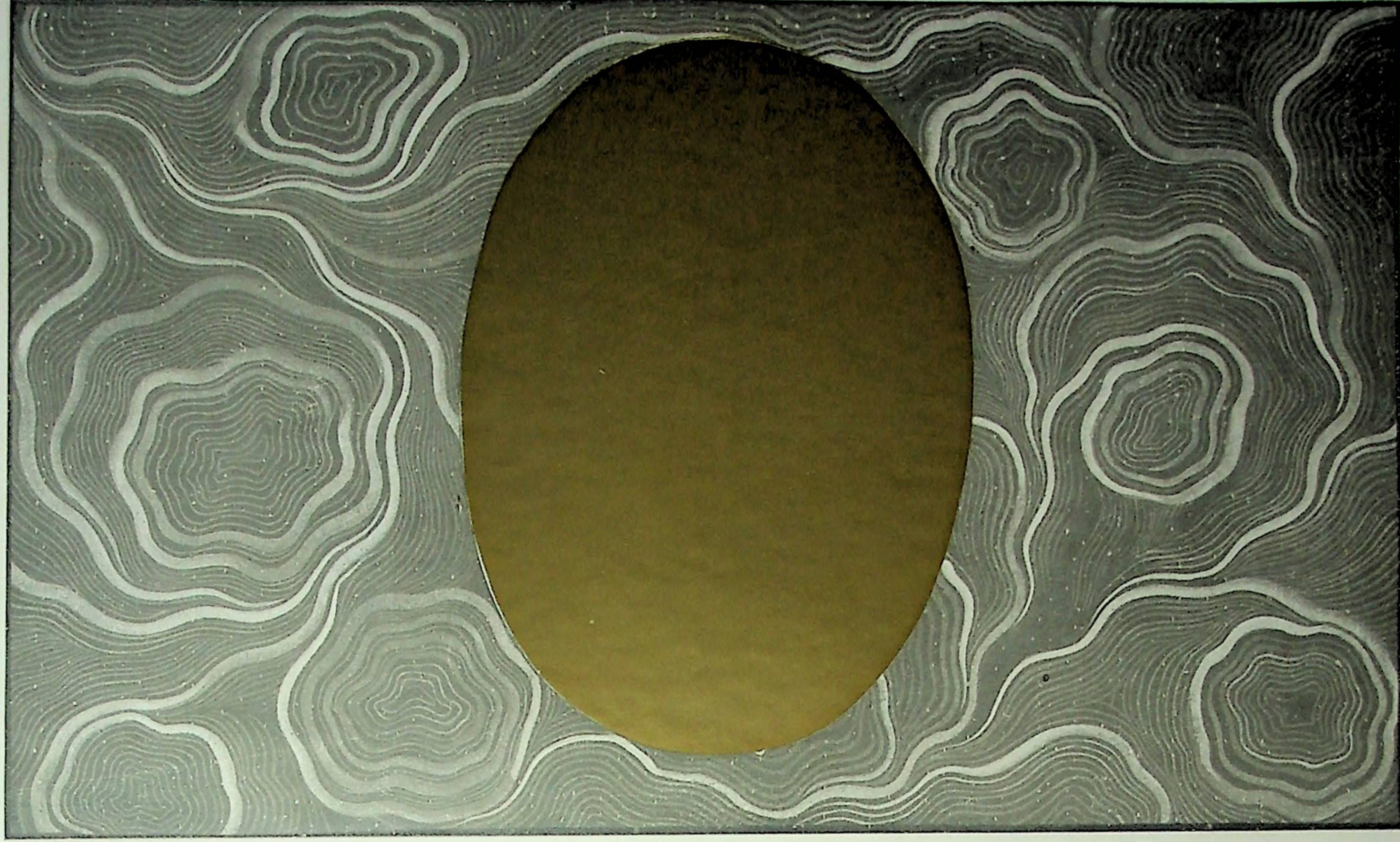
(1) The dark regions are those of the Universal, *Parameshṭhī*. According to the *Nāsadīya Sūkta*, there were two Darknesses in the primeval stage or *ab intra*

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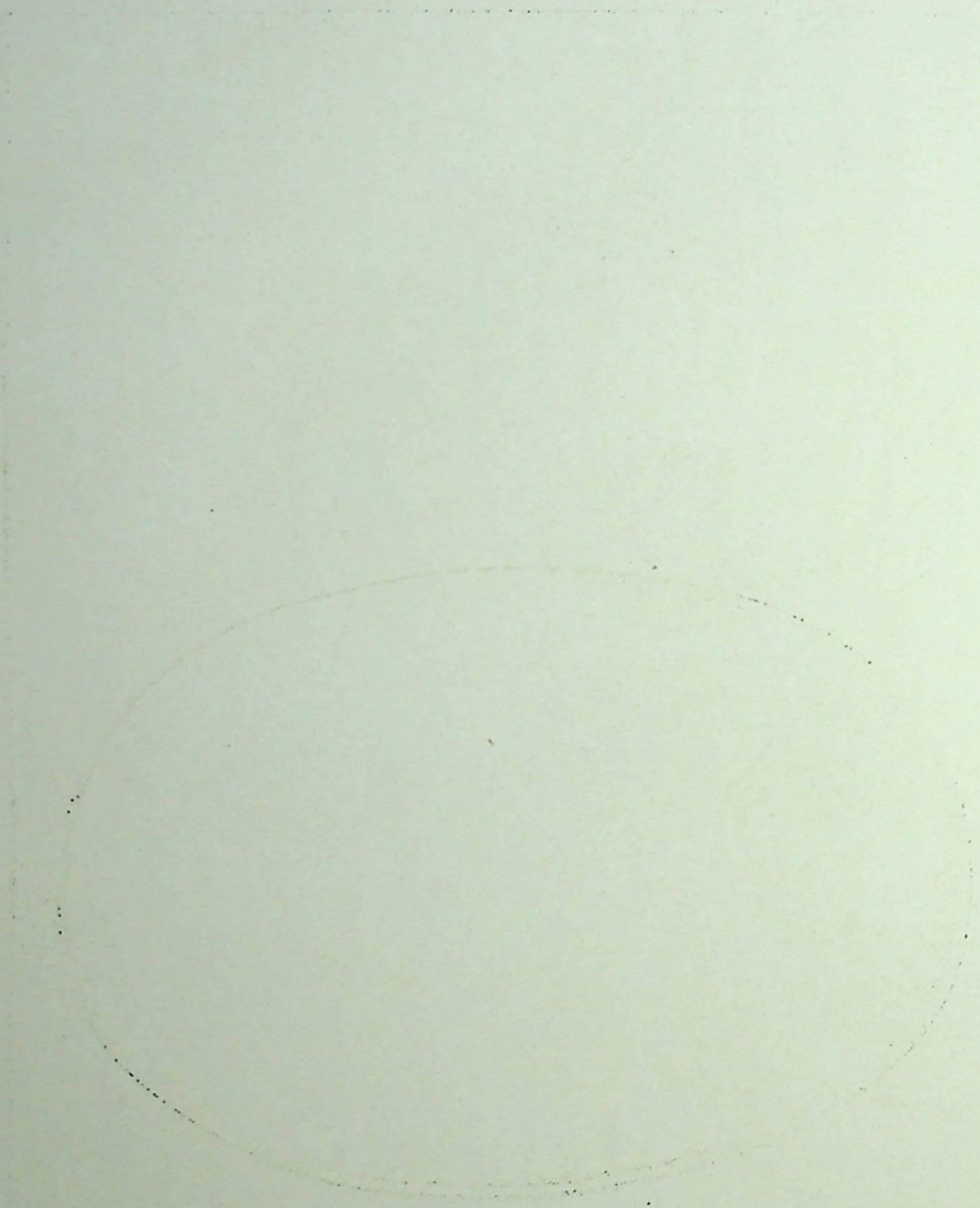
[47] *Griffith*—Dark is the descent: the birds are golden-colured; up to the heaven they fly robed in the waters.

Again descend they from the seat of Order, and all the earth is moistened with their fatness.

Wilson—The smooth-gliding wafters (of the rain, the solar rays), clothing the waters with a dark cloud, ascend to heaven : they come down again from the dwelling of the rain, and immediately the earth is moistened with water.



Mantra–47 हिरण्यगर्भ The Golden Germ



(*tama āsīt tamasā gūḷhamagre*, RV. 10.129.3). The first darkness refers to *Svayambhū*, the self-existent Creator who is also known as *Ka Prajāpati* or *Nabhya Prajāpati* and like the mathematical point is unknown and unknowable (*apratarkyamavijñeyam, tamo bhūtam*, Manu, 1.5). The second darkness is *Parameshṭhī*, the Universal which has several names; e.g., *Mahat, Virāj*, etc. *Svayambhū* is the Father-principle or the fecundating seed and *Parameshṭhī* is the Mother-principle or *Yoni*. The two correspond respectively to *Purusha* and *Prakṛiti* of later philosophy and both are symbolically spoken of as the Two Darknesses. It is in fact these two eternal mysteries implied by the word Dīrghatamas and the scintillating mind which probes into their profound secrets by formulating a symbolical code is named as Ṛishi Dīrghatamas.

The region of *Parameshṭhī* is that of primeval darkness, the Night or Creation in which the whole universe has its source (*jagato niveśanī*). It is the Great Mother. All the paths that are bright on the plane of manifestation illumined by the rays of the Sun are leading to that one descent which is enveloped in darkness and that is termed here as *Kṛishṇa Niyāṇa*. One has to imagine that there is somewhere a Dark Depth or Valley of Darkness where all names and forms are concealed as in the Cave (*guhā*). All the open pathways leading from the brightness of the conscious worlds ultimately merge into that Dark Descent which is the supreme secret (*sampraśna*) It is strange anomaly that light looses itself in the womb of darkness. Only a fraction of the solar spectrum is visible to the eye; the rest both on the infra-red and ultra-violet that is in *aṇu* and *mahat* are concealed from view. The lighted path disappears into dense darkness. It is the same thing as saying that the foot-prints of the *Devas* or the cosmic powers (*pākaḥ prichchhāmi manasā vijānan devānām ena nihitā padāni, Mantra* 5), the differentiations amongst the Seven Cows or the solar rays (*gavām nihitā sapta nāma,* Mantra 3) and the station or the nest of the beautiful Solar Bird (Mantra 7) are all unknown, the supreme mystery which the Seer Dīrghatamas demands in his challenging voice to be explored. Whence is this born ? What is the origin ? (*kuto adhiprajātam*, Mantra 18) are veritable puzzles in the face of which even the godlike human mind chafes but does not find a solution. The words *kṛishṇam niyānam*, Dark is the Source, are of prophetic vision but they only affirm the mystery and do not reveal what the Mother's Womb conceals.

(2) The next question relates to the nature of the Golden Birds (*harayaḥ suparṇāḥ*). The symbolism of the Golden Bird (*hari haṁsa, hiraṇya paksha śakuni*) has an important place in Vedic imagery where the Seed of Creation (*retas*) of the Life-principle (*Prāṇa*) are conceived of as Gold (*hiraṇya*). Each Life-centre or Babe is a type of the Golden Bird in which *Prāṇa* incarnates as Gold or the Seed which germinates and fructifies to produce another seed like itself in the long chain of crea-

tion. Each *Prāṇa* is the form of Agni. It is a kind of Light (*Rochana, Jyotiḥ*) which has emerged from its dark source. The Cosmos is full with these Golden Birds both on the plane of the universal and the individual manifestations. Even the stars like the Sun are comparable to the Golden Birds; each one of them is a *pataṅga* (*prāṇo vai pataṅgaḥ*, JUB. 3.35.2, 3.36.2; KB. 8.4; RV. 10.177.1-3). Each shining star is like a bird flying in space and flapping its wings for a flight of one thousand days (*sahasrāhṇyaṁ viyatāvasya pakshau, harer haṁsasya patataḥ svargam*, AV. 10.8.18, 13.2.38, 13.3.14). We are indebted to the Atharva in identifying the Golden Haṁsa with Āditya and Agni (*ādityameva te parivadanti sarve agniṁ dvitīyaṁ trivṛitaṁ cha haṁsam*, AV. 10.8.17), and to the Ṛig Veda for identifying Haṁsa with Indra (*bībhatsūnāṁ sayujaṁ haṁsamāhuḥ......Indraṁ ni chikyuḥ kavayo manīshā*, 10.124.9). The symbolism of Indra, Agni, Sūrya as Haṁsa is significant and perfectly clear as referring to the mighty principle of *Prāṇa* which is the off-spring of the Mother-principle and is the Seed of the Cosmos. Dīrghatamas himself has spoken about-this *suparṇa* doctrine in Mantras 20-22, where he speaks of the Life-centres as Honey sucking Birds (*madhvadaḥ suparṇāḥ*, RV. 1.164.22). The doctrine of the Golden Bird, *Hari Haṁsa* or *Suparṇa* is intimately related to that of Hiraṇyagarbha, as I have shown elsewhere the Vedic Seers were very clear about its meaning (see my book : 'Sparks From The Vedic Fire', (*Hiraṇyagarbha*, pp. 14-28). The Golden *Purusha* is *Nārāyaṇa* who was the son of *Aditi* or Infinite Nature or the Universal Mother which is the same as *Mahad Yoni*, the Cosmic Womb. The Atharva Veda gives us in a *sūtra* form the secret of the *Hiraṇyagarbha* doctrine : *sa prajāpatiḥ suvarṇamātman-napaśyat tatprājanayat,* AV. 15.1.2. That is, *Prajāpati*, the self-existent Creator had a vision of Gold in his own Body and by its potency he created. Clearly Gold here is the same as *retas* (*śukraṁ hiraṇyam*) TB. 1.7.6.3 or Prāṇa (*Prāṇo vai hiraṇyam*, ŚB. 7.5.2.8.) the immortal Life-principle (amṛitamāyur hiraṇyam, ŚB. 3.8.2.27).

It is in one word termed Agni as the son of Waters (*apāṁ napāt*), which is also the meaning of Nārāyaṇa according to the famous verse of Manu (Āpo nārā iti proktā āpo vai narasūnavaḥ, tā yadasyāyanaṁ proktaṁ tasmān nārāyaṇaḥ smṛitaḥ, Manu, 1.10).

Each *Prāṇa* or Life-centre by itself is new but the principle of Motherhood symbolised as *Āpaḥ* give it the bodily vestment, viz. shell of the Pañcha-Bhūtas. It is the Mother's greatest anxiety and miracle to weave for the son a garment (*vastrā putrāya mātaro vayanti*, RV. 5.47.6). There is no creature, animate or inanimate, that does not put on the robe given to it by its Mother. In fact each body is measured out by the Mother-principle according to the potentialities of its womb; each *garbha* is processed in accordance with its *Yoni*.

The imagery of the poet is that the primeval ocean is like the dark descent, a bottomless pit of unfathomable depth from which creative centres are coming up by the power of Prāṇic vibrations and these are visible to us as the many universes on the cosmic plane and the innumerable Life-centres on the individual plane.

(4) The heaven where the Birds are flying is the region of immortality, the divine *Lokas*, known as *Dyauḥ*, the symbol of *Prāṇa*, as against Pṛithivī, the symbol of Matter. *Dyauḥ*, *Deva* and *Hiraṇya* or *Prāṇa* are identical principles; although the Golden Haṁsa incarnates in Matter yet it can never leave its divine character and source in the celestial heights.

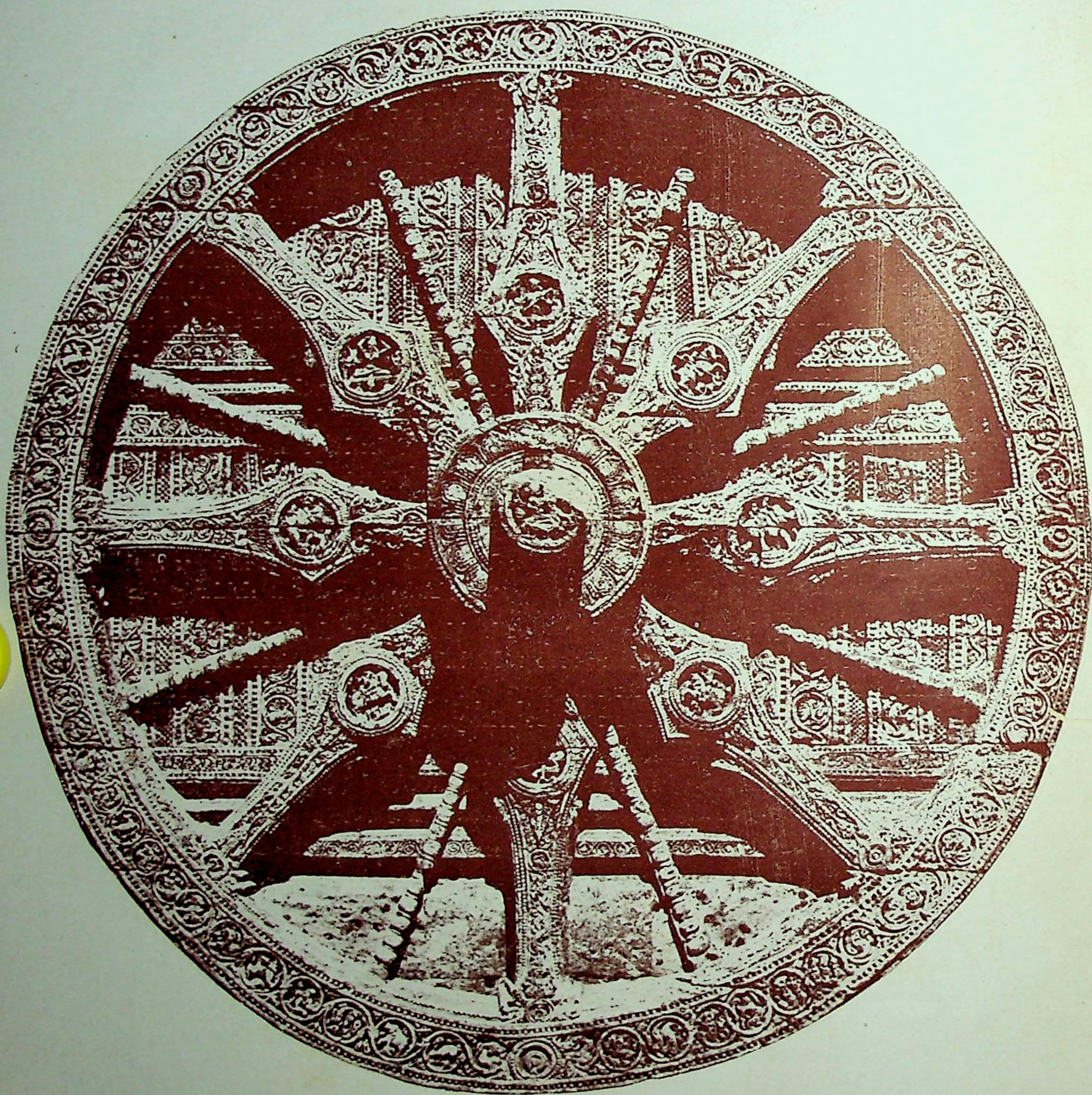
The word *Ṛita-Sadana* is very significant, which supplies the key to the identification of the several motifs of this Mantra. *Ṛita* is the region of *Parameshṭhī* (*ṛitameva parameshṭhī*, TB. 1.5.5.1). That is the ocean of Varuṇa, the Lord of *Ṛita*. The *Ṛita* of *Parameshṭhī* becomes transformed as *Satya* in the form of Sūrya or the individual centre of manifestation. In *Ṛita* or the universal there is no fixed centre or every point is a centre. The individuated *prāṇic* power is the form of Agni or the Truth of its Aṅgiras nature (*tavetat satyamaṅgiraḥ*, ṚV. 1.1.6). The associated idea of *Ṛita-Sadana* is that the Golden Birds are rising from its Waters, appearing in space and returning to their source (*ta āvavṛitran*), and thus forming a complete circle or rhythm of coming and going (*eti cha preti cha*, VS. 27.45, AB. 15.16). Dīrghatamas himself has referred to this rhythm as *apān prān*, Mantra 38; *ā cha parā cha pathibhiścharantam*, Mantra 31.

(6) The word *Ghṛita* has a distinct symbolism in Vedic terminology. The region of Parameshṭhī is spoken of as the Cow-Pen, *Vraja, Goshṭhāna* and the cows sheltered in that Cave are released for motion in the region of Sūrya as the solar rays or types of movement or vibrations. Wherever there is a cow she yields milk. Indeed the principle of Motherhood is made effective by the conversion of Water into Milk out of the affection in the heart of the Mother. The distinction between water and milk depends on the fact that in water there is no fat or butter, but milk is permeated by millions and millions of tiny globules of butter in a highly emulsified form. Butter is the symbol of Seed or *retas*; and in the beginning of creation, an intense shower of such butter-globules of fecundating potencies permeates the Cosmos and deposits itself in the cosmic womb of the Mother. In the Ṛig Veda this is referred to as *saṁbhṛitaṁ pṛishadāiyam*, 10.90.8. This shower of *Ghṛita* or the Seed (*reto vai, ghṛitam*, ŚB. 9.2.3.44; reta ājyam, ŚB. 1.3.1.18). Indeed all the divine powers between Earth and Heaven enter the Seed or the Germ deposited in the Mother's Womb and processed there as the Babe by the mysterious chemistry of Motherhood, symbolising infinite Nature herself. When the Ṛishi thinks of the

Golden Birds, he is speaking in simple words of this fecundating potency of Prāṇic forces which are constantly coming from Father Heaven to Mother Earth. In Ṛig Veda, 10.130, of which the Ṛishi is the Cosmic Yajña of Prajāpati (*Yajñaḥ Prājāpatyaḥ*) and the deity is Bhāvavṛittam, i.e. cosmogony (Sṛishṭi-Vidyā), we find that amongst the eight questions formulated about the ultimate origins, one relates to the principle of *Ājya*, same as *Bhuvanasya retaḥ* (Mantra 36) and *Pṛishadājyam* (RV. 10.90.8).

It is evident that the Father's Germ finds its fulfilment in the Mother's Womb and the same is stated in the last part of the Mantra. Pṛithivī is of course the Earth before us, but as a Goddess, she is divine in nature and is the symbol of Motherhood (Dyauḥ pitā pṛithivī mātā)—the Earth is the Mother not only of this limited world of ours, but she stands as the symbol of the Great Mother of the Universe itself. What is that mysterious Goddess, who has produced the macrocosm and the microcosm, both infinite in thier own way. Such is the power of ideas in this single Mantra which refers to several of the well-known Vidyās found in other Mantras of this Book itself.





Mantra 48—चक्रमेकम्

Sun-Wheel

MANTRA 48

द्वादश प्रधयश्चक्रमेकं त्रीणि नभ्यानि क उ तच्चिकेत।
तस्मिन्त्साकं त्रिंशता न शङ्कवोऽर्पिताः षष्टिर्न चलाचलासः॥

—ऋ० वे० १।१६४।४८॥

The Wheel is single; twelve are the Fellies; three are the Naves. What man has understood it ?

Therein three hundred and sixty spokes are fixed together which can never be loosened.[48]

The imagery of the Time Wheel is invoked here again. The twelve Fellies are obviously the twelve months of the year. The Wheel is the symbol of *Saṁvatsara* and of movement. Whatever has been said about the Wheel as the *Kāla-Chakra* or *Saṁvatsara-Chakra* under mantras 11, 12, 13 and 14 applies equally well here also. The Wheel is single (*ekaṁ*), that is the one principle integrating all the vast phenomena of Time and Space in the cosmos. Although there are many time-units at different levels, they are all characterised by a single driving force which is supplying momentum to the thousand spokes of the Wheel. Time is symbolised in several ways, viz. Horse (*Kālo aśvo vahati saptaraśmiḥ*, AV. 19.53.1), Wheel, Full Vase (*Pūrṇaḥ Kumbho'dhi kāla āhitaḥ* etc. AV. 19.53.3). It was identified by the Bhāgavatas as the Vast Immortal Wheel of a thousand spokes (*Sahasrāra Ajita Mahā chakra*, Ahirbudhnya Saṁhitā). In spite of there being a single *Chakra* symbolising Time, there are numerous time-units in their relative conceptions.

According to the *Kālavāda* philosophy absolute time is the same as Brahman and the different units are so many Devas. The Śvetāśvatara Up. mentions *kālavāda* in a list of other philosophical doctrines. It was the same as the *Ahorātravāda* in which creation is typified by Day and dissolution by Night. *Sarga* and *Pralaya* constitute a rhythmic rolling of the two halves of the Wheel in one pendulous move-

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[48] *Griffith*—Twelve are the fellies, and the wheel is single ; three are the naves. What man hath understood it ?

Therein are set together spokes three hundred and sixty, which in nowise can be loosened.

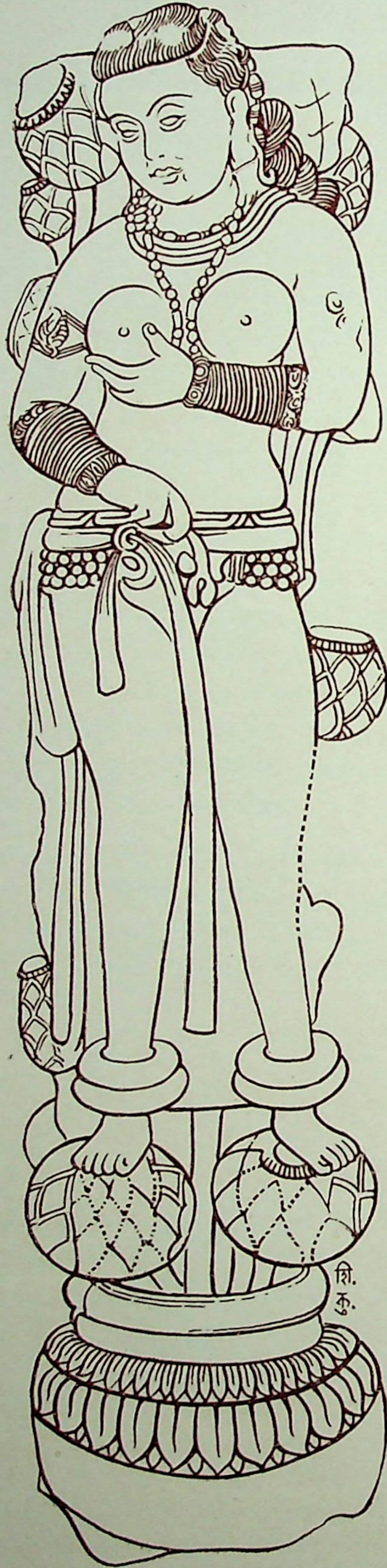
Wilson—The fellies are twelve the wheel is one ; three are the axles: but who knows it ? within it are collected 360 (spokes), which are, as it were, moveable and immoveable.

ment. A strange imagery of Time as Horse is elaborated by Dīrghatamas in RV. I.162-163, saying that Time as horse can not come within human experience unless it is parcelled out into various units as *Ahorātra*, *Māsa*, *Ayana*, *Saṁvatsara*, etc. This is the cutting of the body of the horse. Time is also conceived as the hatchet (*svadhiti*) which is cutting short the lives of all men and creatures, or it is the thunderbolt which is pulverising into dust, the balls of matter flitting in space (*saṁvatsaro hi vajraḥ*, ŚB. 3.4.4.15). As the Ṛishi clearly puts it : 'Time is the Divine Horse (*devajāta sapti*, *devabandhu vāji*) of which the thirty-four ribs are being cut, bit by bit, and yet the horse is neither killed nor emasculated (*na vā u etan mriyase na rishyasi*, RV. I.162.21).

The Wheel is said to have three naves (*trinabhya*), same as *trinābhi* of mantra 2, where the full significance of the tricentric pattern of the Time-Wheel (*kāla-chakra*) and of the cosmic Wheel (*Brahmāṇḍa-Chakra*) have been explained. In mantra 11, there is a reference to seven hundred and twenty twin-sons of Agni, denoting the 360 days and 360 nights of *Saṁvatsara*, the most important unit of time revolution. Here they have been mentioned as 360 *Śaṅkus* which translated by Griffith as spokes; it is same thing to think of them as firmly fixed pegs marking out the yearly course along which the Wheel of Time revolves.

The Ṛishi is impressed with the mysterious majesty of Time and makes a confident statement about it : 'Who has ever understood the strange Wheel ?', the implication being that it is a mystery beyond the comprehension of human mind and similar to the other ultimate categories of the created cosmos like Brahman, Mind, Life, etc.





Mantra 49–यस्ते स्तनः शशयो
यो मयोभूः

Mother's Breast,
A Lake of Milk
and Spring of Bliss

MANTRA 49

यस्ते स्तनः शशयो यो मयोभूर्येन विश्वा पुष्यसि वार्याणि ।
यो रत्नधा वसुविद् यः सुदत्रः सरस्वति तमिह धातवे कः ॥

—ऋ० वे० १।१६४।४९॥

Sarasvatī, that exhaustless breast of yours, spring of Pleasure, with which you feed all best things,

Giver of Wealth, finder of Vasus, rich-giver—bestow that breast on us for our sustenance.[49]

This Mantra is an invocation of goddess Sarasvatī. It is the sincere prayer of a child to its mother. That mother is named Sarasvatī, described earlier in RV. 1.3.10-12, as the Great Flood (*Maho arṇaḥ*) released from the waters of the primeval ocean. Sarasvatī is the Great Goddess herself, the upholder and genius of yajña (*yajñaṁ dadhe Sarasvatī*). She is the impelling *Śakti* of *Manas* and *Prāṇa* (*chetantī*), the same as *Chitta* or *Chetanā*. She is one of the three great goddesses (*Tisro Devīḥ*) of the Āprī Hymns where the Three Goddesses are the Three Mothers who between them create the triadic pattern of the world.

But according to a well-understood approach of Vedic thought Sarasvatī may as well be the principal goddess or divine power whom Brahmā conceived as his own Daughter or Female energy, in whom he deposited the cosmic germ. Sāvitrī and Śatarūpā are identical principles. The doctrine of Sarasvatī perfectly synchronises with Vāk (*Vāg vai Sarasvatī*, ŚB. 2.5.4.6; KB. 5.2; TB. I.3.4.5; GB. 2. 1.20; AV. 2.24). In the form of Vāk, Sarasvatī becomes coeval in majesty with the Primordial Mother (*Mūla Avyakta Prakṛiti*). According to the basic ordinance of the One self-fissioning into two, Prajāpati transformed his own self into male and female, or two halves of a single egg by which Hiraṇyagarbha or the Golden Germ was produced.

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[49] *Griffith*—That breast of thine exhaustless, spring of pleasure, wherewith thou feedest all things that are choicest,

Wealth-giver, treasure-finder, free bestower, bring that, Sarasvatī, that we may drain it.

Wilson—Sarasvatī, that retiring breast, which is the source of delight, with which thou bestowest all good things, which is the container of wealth, the distributor of riches, the giver of good (fortune), that (bosom) do thou lay open at this season for our nourishment.

Sarasvatī as Infinite Nature is the mother cow who is suckling all. The Seven Jewels (*sapta ratnāni*), which have been explained as Mind, Life, and the five gross elements of Matter are the constituents of Sarasvatī's milk like protein, carbohydrates, fat etc. of our modern analysis of cow's milk. So also the Eight Vasus are present in the milk of Sarasvatī, typifying the eight principles of manifestation (*ete. hīdaṁ Sarvaṁ vāsayante tasmād vasava iti*, ŚB. 11.6.3.6). *Manas*, *Prāṇa*, *Apāna*, and the *Pañcha-Bhūtas* are the Eight Vasus. This was the *Ashṭamūrti* doctrine of the later Śaivas and the same as the ancient *Kumāra Vidyā*, the composite form of eight *dhishṇya* Agnis (*Agniṁ taṁ manye yo vasuḥ*, RV. 5.6.1). The account of the eight names of Rudra was an ancient Vedic doctrine elaborated in the ŚB. and known by the single name of *Kaumāra Sarga*. In simple language it means the Life-principle manifested in matter with the integration of *Manas, Prāṇa,* and *Vāk* (*etanmayo vā ayam-ātmā vāṅmayo manomayaḥ prāṇamayaḥ*, ŚB. 14.4.3.10). The Seven Jewels in the milk of Mother Sarasvatī refer to the level of matter and the Eight Vasus to Prāṇic manifestation. These potencies of the Mother's milk are creating the Prāṇic and material forms in each individual centre. The Life-principle or *Prāṇāgni*, the Miraculous Babe (*Chitra Śiśu*) is incarnating again and again in new forms (*navo navo bhavati jāyamānaḥ*, RV. 10.85.19) and in each birth suckling its immortal drink from the breast of the mother which confers both strength (*Bala*) and bliss (*Ānanda*).

It may be noted that the life stream is symbolised either in terms of Agni or of Soma; in the case of the former, it is a spark from the great conflagration, and in the case of the latter, it is a gushing stream from the great flood or ocean. Both statements are valid as we approach the problem from the philosophic point of view, looking upon Agni (*Agni-bhūyishṭha*) or upon Water (*Āpo-bhūyishṭha*, RV. 1.1.61.9) as the cosmic source, a statement made by Dīrghatamas himself. What was Sarasvatī in the Ṛig Veda becomes the holy Gaṅgā in later religions thought, both being based on an identical symbolism. Gaṅgā also is the river of life, descended from heaven through the penances of Bhagīratha, typifying Sūrya.



MANTRA 50

यज्ञेन यज्ञमयजन्त देवास्तानि धर्माणि प्रथमान्यासन् ।
ते ह नाकं महिमानः सचन्त यत्र पूर्वे साध्याः सन्ति देवाः ॥

—ऋ० वे० १।१६४।५०॥

By means of *yajña* the gods performed their *yajña* : those were the primeval ordinances.

Those mighty ones attained the height of heaven, where the *Sādhya* Gods of old dwell.[50]

This is a Mantra taken from the Purusha Sūkta (RV. 10.90.16). It inculcates the doctrine of two *Yajñas* the one in the universal and the other in the individual. Their pattern was fixed by Prajāpati once for all in the beginning of creation as the Archetypal for all subsequent manifestation. Each *yajña* on whatever level and in whichsoever context is sustained by a higher *yajña* existing as its proto-type.

The complete symbolism of *Yajña-Vidyā* may be invoked for grasping the implications of this Mantra. The most perfect example of *yajña* performed by *yajña* is that of the two parents creating new life, each being a form of *Prāṇāgni* as explained by Aitareya : "*yajño vai tad devā yajñam ayajanta yad Agnināgnim ayajanta*" (AB. 1.16). Fire is produced from Fire—this is the great law of Cause and Effect which is the foundation of all Prāṇic and material working (*Agnināgniḥ samidhyate,* RV. 1.12.6.). As we say in popular adage : '*yathā piṇḍe tathā Brahmāṇḍe*'—there is complete correspondence between the Individual and the Universal, or between the bodily cell and the cosmic consciousness, or between the small atom and the big solar system; everywhere it is the law of *yajñena yajñam*. Svayaṁbhū is one *yajña* as father and *Parameshṭhī* is another as mother. *Virāṭ* Vishṇu is one *yajña* and so also Vāmana Vishṇu

[50]*Griffith*—By means of sacrifice the Gods accomplished their sacrifice : these were the earliest ordinances.

These Mighty Ones attained the height of heaven, there where the Sādhyas, Gods of old, are dwelling.

Wilson—The gods sacrifice with sacrifice, for such are their first duties : those mighty ones, assemble in heaven, where the divinities who are to be propitiated (by sacred rites) abide.

is also a *yajña*. The cosmic *yajña* is triple and so is the individual (*traivṛit* or *tryī-vidyā*; *trivṛiddhi yajñaḥ*, ŚB. 1.1.4.23). The cosmic *yajña* is a pentad and so is the *Prāṇic yajña* in the individual fivefold (*Pāṅkta yajña*). The *Saṁvatsara* is the type of *yajña* and the *Ahorātra* units created by it are also a similar *yajña*. *Yajña* is the very self of both the Devas and the Bhūtas (*Sarveshāṁ vā esha bhūtānāṁ sarveshāṁ devānām ātmā yad yajñaḥ*, ŚB. 14.3.2.1). *Yajña* is the Great God (*esha hi vai mahān devo yad yajñaḥ*, GŚ. 1.2.16) which has entered the mortal bodies (*maho devo martyāñā viveśa*, RV. IV.58.3). There exists a *yajña* in the *Ṛita* (*yajño vai ṛitasya yoniḥ*, ŚB. I.3.4.16) and another *yajña* in *Satya* or *Sūrya*. Savitā is a model of *yajña* and so is Sāvitri his energy. There is an unmanifest *yajña* (*Paroksha*, ŚB. III. 1.3.25) and another manifest *yajña* (*Pratyaksha*); a *yajña* in the Upper Half (*Pūrvārdha*) that is the source and a *yajña* in the Lower Half (*Jaghanārdha*) same as *Avarārdha* or the Cosmos. The *yajña*-model in the unborn (*Aja*) directs the type in the born creatures (*ajāyamāno bahudhā vijāyate*). The *Akshara yajña* of *Prāṇa* regulates the *Kshara yajña* of matter; the *yajña* of old (*Purāṇa yajña*, RV. 10.130.6) is archetypal for each new *yajña*.

In verse 23, Dirghatamas speaks of the two *Gāyatra* forces, the one *Prāṇic* and the other *Bhautika* and both follow an identical rule. The seed in the soil has within it a world of its own, an orderly system thrown up as the fruit of a pre-existing *yajña*, which in course of time gives birth to a new *yaiña* in the form of a tree. We have an unending chain from *Purusha* to *Śukra* and from *Śukra* to *Purusha* again, so that the law of *yajñena yajñam* does not come to a stop but continues with every new link in the long chain of life (*Purāṇā anuvenati*, *RV*. 10.135. 1). It started from Yama the Arch-ancestor of us all. As light is fed from light, so *yajña* by the glory of *yajña* signifies the eternity of creation and is an important law manifesting itself similar to one time-rhythm pressed by another (*Kālaṁ Kālena pīḍayan*). The vision of Dīrghatamas of the two *yajñas* in the *Rodasī Brahmāṇḍa* of heaven and earth (*Dyauḥ* and *Pṛithivī*) corresponds to the Two Darknesses, the *Svayaṁbhū* and *Parameshṭhi* (*tama āsīt tamasā gūḷhamagre*), the one energising the other. The primeval laws of Prajāpati are fixed and changeless, those are the Dharmas which support the cosmos and all beings. It should be recognised that there is a *yajña* beyond Sūrya that is *Amṛitam*, and another below it on the side of earth that is *Mṛityu* or within the grip of death (ŚB. X.5.1.4, *yat kiṁ chārvāchīnamādityāt sarvaṁ tan mṛityunāptam*). Sūrya is the meeting point between the immortal heaven and mortal earth and that is known as *Nāka pṛishṭha* or *Divaspṛishṭha*. Each individual that is born as the composite form of mind and matter is bound to stand on this intermediate ridge between heaven and earth, so that he receives intimations from both the worlds. We are all Janus-faced, and life may be compared to the two-headed Eagle (*ubhayataḥ Śīrshṇī Aditi Suparṇī*) looking both east and west (*suprāchi, supratīchī*, ŚB. 3.2.4.16).

The doctrine of *yajña* from *yajña* also points to the Vedic law of *Anupraveśa* : the Archetypal has entered all subsequent creations (*Prathamachchhad avarāñā viveśa*, RV. 10.81.1; *tat srishṭvā tadevānuprāviśat*). Dīrghatamas puts it another way : 'The child is his father's father (*Kavir yaḥ putraḥ sa pitushpitāsat*, RV. 1.164.16). The father is completely imaged in the son as the preceding seed in the following seed (*ātmā vai jāyate putraḥ*). The Creator imposed upon himself this golden rule by which the Creation is being revitalised ever anew by all His infinite splendour and divine magnificence, so that the immortal principle (*amartyaḥ*), although destined to be juxtaposed with the mortal (*Amartyo martyenā sayoniḥ*), yet retains its freshness and vigour for all times.

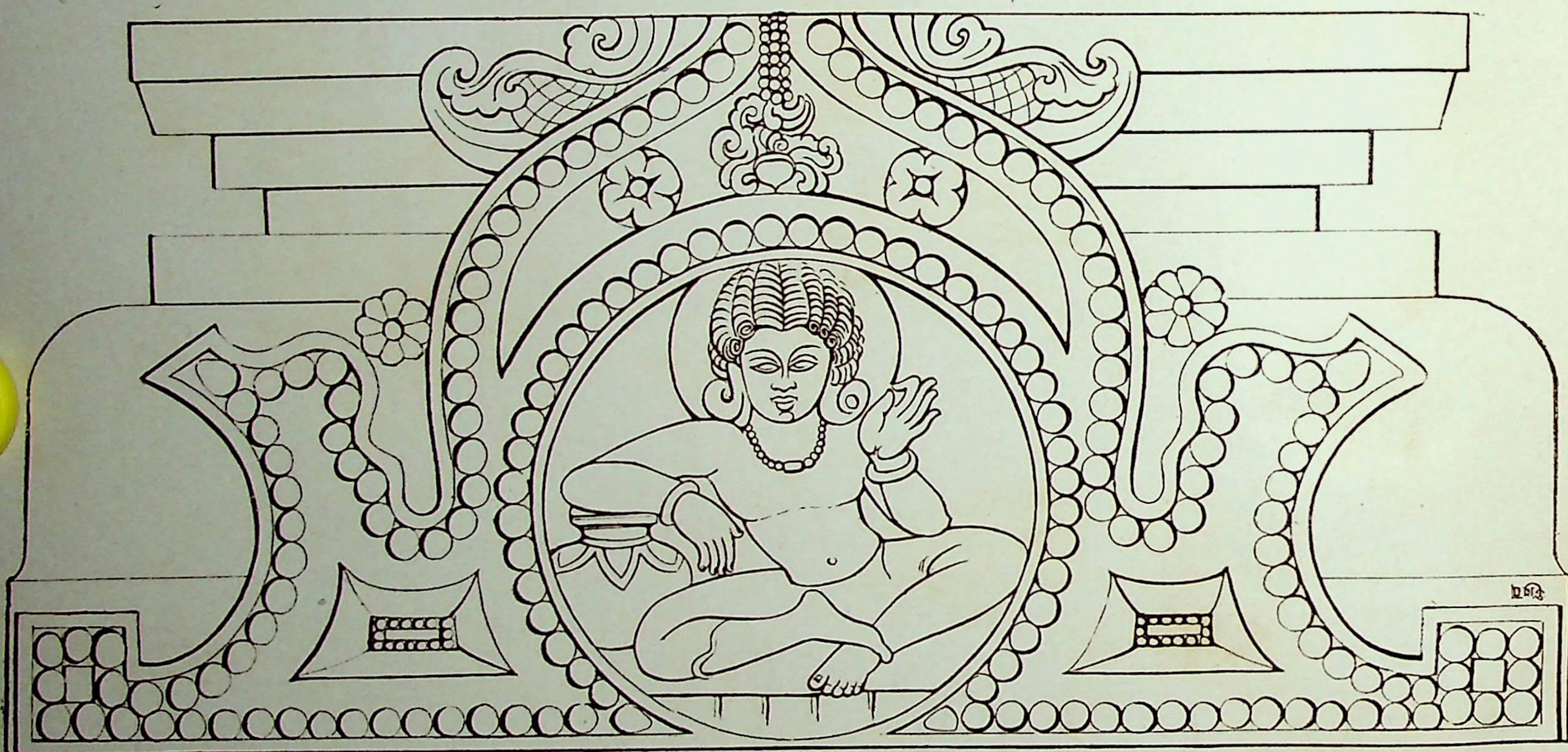
Agni, Vāyu and Āditya are the three Gods endowed with triple majesties (*devā mahimānaḥ*, ŚB. X.2.2.2). The question may be asked as to what is the source of the majesty of Gods and how many are the majesties. The answer is that the principle of *yajña* presided over by the Deva is the source of the divine majesty (*yajño vai mahimā*, ŚB. VI.3.1.18), which has the nature of *Amṛitam* and is truly death-conquering, illuminating and dispelling the āsuric darkness. The three-fold potencies of the three Devas are also known as the Three Thousands (*tredhā sahasram*, RV. VI.69.8), or the Three Infinities comprising the Infinity of mind (*Manaḥ-Sāhasrī*, also called *Veda-sāhasrī*); of Life, (*Prāṇasāhasrī*, also known as *Loka-sāhasri*); and the Infinity of Matter, *Bhūtasāhasrī*, also named *Vāk-sāhasrī* (*tadāhuḥ kiṁ tat sahasramitīme lokā ime vedā atho vāgiti brūyāt*, AB. VI.15).

The cosmos is the *mahimā* of the transcendent *Purusha* (*etāvān asya mahimā*), and constituted as it is of the three *Lokas* and the three *Devas*, they represent the true greatness of Purusha. It is therefore that Agni, Vāyu and Āditya are the *Mahimānaḥ Devāḥ* forming the complete cycle of *yajña*. These three deities have their sphere of influence in the three Lokas, *Pṛithivī*, *Antariksha* and *Dyauḥ*, which are the three worlds of which they are the powers (*iyameva pṛithivī viśvam agnir naro'ntarikshameva viśvaṁ vāyurnaro dyaureva viśvam ādityo naraḥ*, ŚB. 9.3.1.3). The complete scheme of the trinitarian gods and three worlds makes up the perfect form of Vaiśvānara fire which is the symbol of the triune pattern of creation. The Ṛishi tells us that the *mahimānaḥ* gods reach upto the mid-point of heaven where the primeval *Sādhya* Gods existed *ab intra*. They are known as the *Pūrve Devāḥ* as contrasted to the *Avare Devāḥ* or the three lower gods, viz. Agni, Vāyu and Āditya (*sādhyā vai nāma devebhyo devāḥ pūrva āsan*, Tāṇḍya, 25.8.2), The Sādhyās are of the nature of *Prāṇas*, since it were they who tickled Prajāpati to incarnate into these three worlds (*Prāṇā vai sādhyā devās ta etaṁ prajāpatim agra evamasādhayan*, ŚB. 10.2.2.3). The *Sādhya Devas* are of the nature of pure Prāṇic power of *Asat* and the Devas descending into the material world are *Sat*. According to the *Sadasadvāda*

doctrine, the *Sat* was born from the *Asat* (*devānām pūrvye yuge' sataḥ sadajāyata*, RV. X. 72.2). The *Asat* principle was the same as the *Ṛishis* who were none else than the *Prāṇas* (*asadvā idamagra āsīt tad āhuḥ kiṁ tad asadāsīditi Ṛishayo vāva te' gre' sadāsīttadāhuḥ, ke ta rishaya iti, prāṇā vā ṛishayaḥ*, ŚB. 6.1.1.1). Thus it appears that *Sādhya* gods of primeval ages were the same as the *Asad Rishis.*

It is also said that the Sādhya Devas are of the nature of metres producing the three-fold Cosmic rhythm (*Chhandāṁsi vai Sādhyā devāste' gre' gnināgnim ayajanta te svargaṁ lokamāyan*, AB. 1.16). Thus the *Sādhya* Devas have their place in heaven or *Nāka*, the highest point of Bliss or *Svarga*, from where they regulate and direct the *Mahimānaḥ Devatā* or gods of real majesty or effective power. These two definitions, viz. *Mahimānaḥ* and *Sādhyāḥ* should be clearly distinguished in the two-fold context of *Martya* and *Amṛita*. It may also be noted that Agni, Vāyu and Āditya are the three aspects of one andt he same Agni and their Manes (*Pitṛis*) are known as *Agnishvātta*, 'Tasters of Agni' or 'Fire-eating'. On the other hand the *Sādhya* gods wait upon Parameshṭhī Prajāpati, the Universal who is the Father 'wealthy in watery stores' (*pitaraṁ diva āhuḥ para ardhe purīshiṇam*, RV. I. 164.12), and therefore their Manes are known as *Soma-sadaḥ*, 'having their abode, in the Soma of Parameshṭhī' or 'in the region of Ṛita'. In simple words it connotes the twin principles of Agni and Soma, Agni operative on this side of life and Soma on the other in what is known as formless manifestation. We may at once see that Soma in the higher heaven (*Parārdhe*) and Agni in the lower one (*avarārdhe*) are each a type of *yajña*, but the two principles must combine in order to produce a third *yajña* like the two parents procreating the child. This is the meaning of *yajñena yajñam* in which the two-fold Devas Agni and Soma come together for accomplishing a new *yajña.*





Mantra 51—अग्नीषोमात्मकं जगत्

Agni with Soma in a Mandala

MANTRA 51

समानमेतदुदकमुच्चैत्यव चाहभिः ।
भूमिं पर्जन्या जिन्वन्ति दिवं जिन्वन्त्यग्नयः ॥

—ऋ० वे० १।१६४।५१॥

It is the same water, which with the power of passing days mounts up and falls down. The monsoon clouds give life to the earth, and the fires from below reanimate the heaven.[51]

This mantra describes the cyclic rhythm between the mortal earth and the immortal heaven. This is best exemplified in the circulation of waters which by the heat of the solar rays rise up to the sky during summer months and come back to the earth during rains from the monsoon clouds (*Parjanyāḥ*). The water is the same but subjected to the variations of heat and cold. A mighty circulation enveloping the vast occans and the wide earth is stirred into amazingly stupendous form. Oceans of watery stores are lifted to the sky and thence released in floods of the highest tidal dimensions. This phenomenon is witnessed by physical eyes from year to year and best illustrates the truth of the tensional forces created by Water and Fire. Their magnitude can only be imagined, pervading the earth, the air, the sky and even the stratosphere. The atmospheric currents, hurricanes and monsoon winds, gales and typhoons show the elemental fury of these changes. The quiet Indian sky of the summer season is rocked by lightning and thunder during rains. Such phenomena are wrought by the intrinsic powers of variable temperature rising and falling in their effects of heat and cold (*hima* and *ghraṁsa* AV. 13.1.47-48). The monsoon wind was known as *Mātariśvā* which comes 'rushing, rousing dust and causing trees to tremble when flame pursues the blast' (AV. XII. 1.51, *yasyāṁ vāto mātariśveyate rajāṁsi kṛiṇvaṁśchyāvayaṁścha vrikshān, vātasya pravām upavam upavātyarchiḥ*; cf. also *Pramāthinaṁ balavantaṁ prahāriṇaṁ prabhañjanaṁ mātariśvānamugram*, Karṇaparva, 32.21). It was also known as *Parjanya* of which

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[51] *Griffith*—Uniform, with the passing days, this water mounts and falls again. The tempest-clouds give life to earth, and fires re-animate the heaven.

Wilson—The uniform water passes upwards and downwards in the course of days : clouds give joy to earth ; fires rejoice the heaven.

the full fury is vividly described in the Parjanya Sūkta of the RV. (5. 83.1-10; see also the Vṛishṭi Sūkta of AV, 4.15.1-16).

The simple scientific truth, almost stated in meteorological terms about these constant weather changes is ascribed to the turning Wheel of Nights and Days (*ahobhiḥ=ahorātraiḥ*). This was the principle of *Ahargaṇa* of which the number is said to be a thousand; they by their passing qualities process the ascent and descent of waters by the power of burning western winds (हउँहरा) and biting northern blizzards (डाँफर, रीढ़, झोला, फगुनहटा). These two-fold phenomena shake hands in the rains when the *Śūkarī* winds (हिन्दी सुअरी) blow and fill the skies with gathering clouds (रीती मत आयै पानी भर लायै, तो सूरया के संग आवै बदरी, Rajasthānī folk-song). The phenomenon witnessed everyday as light and darkness is a sampling of heat and cold that are the cause of the tensional movements in the cosmos. At each break of morning throughout the days of the year (*Prati vastoraha dyubhiḥ* RV. O. 189.3) these changes are taking place in what is poetically known as the gestation of the solar rays for nine months and their delivering the watery clouds in proper season. These clouds and dust storms accompanied with thunder and lightning are no doubt external phenomena but they are to be read as visible signs of an inherent cycle in the making of the world. The cataclysmal powers of destruction and recreation ascribed to the changes of daily temperature as witnessed in the vast durations of time really belong to the great Sun Bird who is the harbinger of rain described in the next Mantra.





The Divine on Wings

Mantra 52—दिव्यः सुपर्णः

MANTRA 52

दिव्यं सुपर्णं वायसं बृहन्तमपां गर्भं दर्शतमोषधीनाम् ।
अभीपतो वृष्टिभिस्तर्पयन्तं सरस्वन्तमवसे जोहवीमि ॥

—ऋ० वे० १।१६४।५२॥

I invoke Sarasvān, the celestial Bird, giant denizen of the air, Son of Waters and the lovely germ of plants,

Him who delights us with rain in season, for protection.[52]

The celestial Bird is Sūrya (*divya Suparṇa*). He, the Eagle, belongs to heaven but darts to seize the tiny Quail on earth (*grastāṁ suparṇasya balena vartikām*, Ādi Parva 3·62) where the quail is life on earth in each individual centre and *Suparṇa* is the strong winged Eagle or life in its universal source. The sun is spoken of as the big bird whose wings are typical of the basic duality of creation or the pehnomenon of contraction and expansion. Indeed *Prāṇa* is the powerful *Suparṇa* which is imagined in this Mantra and described by the several epithets applicable both to Agni and Sūrya, the two *Suparṇas* of heaven and earth. The epithet 'Child of waters' is generally used for Agni and it implies that we may think in this context of all the three forms of Agni, viz. Agni, Vāyu and Āditya which are symbolised as Three Birds (*trayaḥ suparṇāḥ*, AV. 18.4.4.). The One Bird is Agni, the Two Birds are Agni and Sūrya, and the Three Birds as three forms of Agni (*suparṇaṁ viprāḥ kavayo vachobhir ekaṁ santaṁ bahudhā kalpayanti*, RV. X. 114.5; see also Mantra X. 114.3-4 for the imagery of the one and two birds). The epithet *darśatam oshadhīnām* is significant as pointing to the heavenly bird present in each individual centre and making it look beautiful. Each living body is verily a plant (*sasyamiva martyaḥ pachyate sasyamivā jāyate punaḥ*), following identical laws of birth, growth and decay. *Prāṇa* is the *Rasa* or life-sap which is keeping the bodies or

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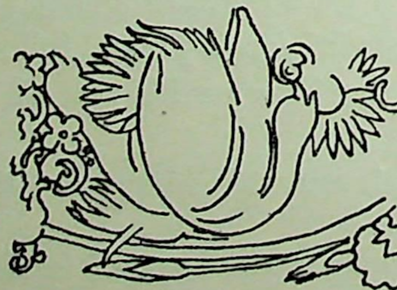
[52]*Griffith*—The Bird Celestical, vast with noble pinion, the lovely germ of plants, the germ of waters,

Him who delighteth us with rain in season, Sarsvān I invoke that he may help us.

Wilson—I invoke for our protection the celestial, well-winged, swift-moving, majestic (Sun); who is the germ of the waters; the displayer of herbs; the cherisher of lakes; replenishing the ponds with rain.

plants evergreen. The whole chlorophyll-chemistry depends on the Life-principle functioning in each plant organism. In fact Life on earth reacts to the glory of Sun in heaven by which the contact between the mortal and immortal worlds is maintained. In Vedic symbology, *Prāṇa* is campared to the *Arka* plant (*Prāṇo vā arkaḥ*, ŚB. X. 4.1.23; *agnir vā arkaḥ*, ŚB. 2.5.1.4). The *Arka* plant (*Calotropis gigentia*) flourishes during the hottest part of the year being sustained by the Sun in the heaven. Life on earth is called *Arka* and the immortal Sun in heaven an *Aśvamedha*, the two constituting the divine pair (*Prāṇāpānau vā etau devānāṁ yad arkāśvamedhau*). Indeed *Arka* is the name of a Sāman Chant seen by Ṛishi Dīrghatamas (*Dīrghatāmso'rko bhavati*, Tāṇḍya XV. 3.34). The presence of *Prāṇa* or Vital airs makes the body beautiful (*darśatam*) and worshipful (*archanīyam*).

The idea of Sarasvān, literally the 'one with stores of water' has reference to Sūrya. In the Vedas we find the conception of three oceans (*trīn samudrān samasṛipata*, VS. 13.31). The ocean of Pṛithivī is called *Arṇava*, that of Parameshṭhī or the region of Varuṇa is known as *Sarasvān* (*Sarasvān dhībhir varuṇo dhṛitavrataḥ*, RV. X. 66.5), and the ocean of Svayambhū is known as *Nabhasvān*. Here the perrenneal sources of supply for Sūrya are not so much the mortal waters (*maraḥ*) drawn by its rays (*marīchi*) from the earth, but they are the immortal waters of Soma which the solar rays extending upwards drink from the ocean of *Ṛita* of *Parameshṭhī* or the Oceanic stores of Varuṇa. That Soma is constantly supplying Sūrya with immortal life so that the Sun lives forever. It is both the individuated *Prāṇa* or earth and the cosmic *Prāṇa* of heavenly Sūrya that stand in need of life and immortality. The transcendent universal source in the ocean of Ṛita called Sarasvān supplies *Brahmaṇaspatī* Soma to replenish Sūrya. Dīrghatamas imagines both Agni and Sūrya as types of *Suparṇa* and invokes for protection the Sarasvān ocean. (*Sarasvantām avase johavīmi*). He whose heart is imbued with such aspiration, experiences the ecstacies coming as showers of heavenly grace.



Reference to Asya-vāmīya Mantras in Vedic Literature

[From Bloomfield's Concordance]

1. अस्य वामस्य पलितस्य होतु : RV. 1.164.1^a; AV. 9.9.1^a; AA. 1.5.3.7; 5.3.2.14; ÇÇ. 18.22.7; N. 4.26^a. P : अस्य वामस्य Kāuç. 18.25. Cf. BṛhD. 4.32 (B) Designated as अस्य वामीय (Sc. sūkta) Vā Dh. 26.6; MDh. 11.251; VADh. 2.5; VHDh. 5.129, 156, 166, 376, 442, 449; 6.44, 439; Rvidh. 1.26.2; BṛhD. 4.31; as पलित चूलिका U. 11; as सलिलं वैश्वदेवम् Ç.Ç 18.22.7.
2. सप्त युञ्जन्ति रथमेकचक्रम् RV. 1.164.2^a; AV. 9.9.2^a; 13.3.18^a; TA. 3.11.8^a; N. 4.27^a.
3. इमं रथमधि ये सप्त तस्थुः RV. 1.164.3^a; AV. 9.9.3^a.
4. को ददर्श प्रथमं जायमानम् RV. 1.164.4^a; AV. 9.9.4^a
5. पाकः पृच्छामि मनसाविजानन् RV. 1.164.5^a; AV. 9.9.6^a
6. अचिकित्वाञ्चिकितुषश्चिदत्र RV. 1.164.6^a; AV. 9.9.7^a
7. इह ब्रवीतु य ईमङ्ग वेदा RV. 1.164.7^a; AV. 9.9.5^a; Cf. Bṛh.D. 1.52
8. माता पितरमृत आ बभाज RV. 1.164.8^a; AV. 9.9.8^a
9. युक्ता मातासीद् धुरि दक्षिणाया RV. 1.164.9^a; AV. 9.9.9^a
10. तिस्रो मातॄस्त्रीन् पितॄन् बिभ्रदेकः RV. 1.164.10^a; AV. 9.9.10^a
11. द्वादशारं नहि तज्जराय RV. 1.164.11^a; AV. 9.9.13^a; N. 4.27
12. पञ्चपादं पितरं द्वादशाकृतिं RV. 1.164.12^a; AV. 9.9.12^a; PRAC U. 1.11^a
13. पञ्चारे चक्रे परिवर्तमाने RV. 1.164.13^a; AV. 9.9.11^a; N. 4.27
14. सनेमि चक्रमजरं वि वावृत RV. 1.164.14^a; AV. 9.9.14^a
15. साकंजानां सप्तथमाहुरेकजं RV. 1.164.15^a; AV. 9.9.16^a; TA. 1.3.1^a; N. 14.19
16. स्त्रियः सतीस्ताँ उ मे पुंस आहुः RV. 1.164.16^a; AV. 9.9.15^a; TA. 1.11.4^a; N. 14.20^a
17. अवः परेण पर एनावरेण RV. 1.164.17^a; AV. 9.9.17^a, 18^b; 13.1.141^a, See अनुवेद etc.
18. अवः परेण पितरं यो अस्या (AV. अस्य वेद) RV. 1.164.18^a; AV. 9.9.18^a
19. ये अर्वाञ्चस्ताँ उ पराच आहु RV. 1.164.19^a; AV. 9.9.19^a; JB. 1.279^a
20. द्वा सुपर्णा सयुजा सखाया RV. 1.164. 20^a; AV. 9.9.20^a; Muṇḍ U. 3.1.1^a; N. 14.30.
21. यत्रा सुपर्णा अमृतस्य भाग (AV भक्षम्).. RV. 1.164.21^a; AV. 9.9.22^a; N. 3.12
22. यस्मिन् वृक्षे मध्वदः सुपर्णा RV. 1.164.22^a; AV. 9.9.21^a
23. यद् गायत्रे अधि गायत्रमाहितम् RV.1.164.23^a;AV. 9.10.1^a;AB.3.12.6^a;KB.14.3^a;GB. 2.3.10
24. गायत्रेण प्रति मिमीते अर्कं RV. 1.164.24^a; AV. 9.10.2^a
25. जगता सिन्धुं दिव्यस्तभायद् RV. 1.164.25^a; AV. 9.10.3^a
26. उप ह्वये सुदुघां धेनुमेताम् RV. 1.164.26^a; AV. 7.73.7^a; 9.10.4^a; AB. 1.22.2; AÇ. 4.7.4; N. 11.43^a. P; उप ह्वये ÇÇ. 5.10.1; Vāit. 14.4.

27. हिंकृण्वन्ती वसुपत्नी वसूनां RV. 1.164.27[a]; AV. 7.73.8[a];9.10.5[a]; AB. 1.22.2;N.11.45[a]. P; हिंकृण्वन्ती ÇÇ 5.10.2.
28. गौरमीमेदनु वत्सं मिषन्तं RV. 1.164.28[a]; AV. 9.10.6[a]; AB. 1.22.2; AÇ. 4.7.4;N.11.42[a]. P; गौर अमीमेत ÇÇ 5.10.6.
29. अयं स शिङ्क्ते येन गौरभीवृता (AV. शिन्ते) RV. 1.164.29[a]; AV. 9.10.7[a]; JB. 2.260 (265)[a]; N. 2.9
30. अनच्छये तुरगातु जीव R V. 1.164.30[a]; AV. 9.10.8[a]
31. अपश्यं गोपामनिपद्यमान RV. 1.164.31[a]; 10.177.3[a]; AV. 9.10.11[a]; VS. 37.17[a]; MS. 4.9.6[a]; 126.3; AB. 1.19.9; ÇB. 14.1.4.9; AA. 2.1.6.6; TA. 4.7.1;5. 6.4; JUB 3.37.1[a], 2; AÇ 4.6.3; N. 14.3[a]. P; अपश्यं गोपाम् Ap. Ç. 15.8.16
32. य ईं चकार न सो अस्य वेद RV. 1.164.32[a]; AV. 9.10.10[a]; N.2.8[a]
33. द्यौर्मे पिता जनिता नाभिरत्र RV. 1.164.33[a]; N. 4.21[a], See द्यौर्नः पिता जनिता
34. पृच्छामि त्वा परमन्तं पृथिव्या RV. 1.164.34[a]; AV. 9.10.13[a]; VS. 23.61[a]; TS. 7.4.18.2[a]; KSA. 4.7[a]; ÇB. 13.5.2.21; TB. 3.9.5.5; AÇ 10.9.2; ÇÇ. 16.6.2; Vāit. 37.3; LÇ. 9.10.13[a]. P; पृच्छामि त्वा KÇ 20.7.14. Cf. BRHD. 1.50
35. इयं वेदिः परो अन्तः पृथिव्या RV. 1.164.35[a];AV. 9.10.14[a];VS. 23.62[a];ÇB. 13.5.2.21; AÇ. 10.9.3; LÇ. 9.10.14[a]. P; इयं वेदिः वा इतः 37.3; KÇ. 20.7.15. See वेदिं आहुः
36. सप्तार्धगर्भा भुवनस्य रेतो RV. 1.164.36[a]; AV. 9.10.17[a]; N. 14.21[a]
37. न वि जानामि यदि वेदमस्मि RV. 1.164.37[a]; AV. 9.10.15[a];N. 7. 3;14.22. Cf.BṚHD. 1.56.
38. अपाङ प्राङेति स्वधया गृभीतो RV. 1.164.38[a]; AV. 9.10.16[a]; A A. 2.1.8.11[a]; N. 14.23.
39. ऋचो अक्षरे (NṚPU.s क्षरे) परमे व्योमन् RV. 1.164.39[a]; AV. 9.10.18[a]; GB. 1.1.22; TB. 3.10.9.4[a]; TA. 2.11.1[a]; Ç vet U. 4.8[a]; NRP.U. 4.2[a]; 5.2[a]; N. 13.10[a]
40. सूयवसाद् भगवती (KÇ. °ti) हि भूया RV. 1.164.40[a]. AV. 7.7.3.11[a]; 9.10.20[a]; AB. 1.22.13; 5.27·6; 7.3.3; KB. 8.7; AÇ. 3.11.4; 4.7.4; KÇ. 25.1.19; APÇ. 9.5.4[a]; N. 11.44[a]; Ps; सूयवसाद् भगवती KÇ. 26.6.23; सूयवसात् ÇÇ. 3.20.1; 5.10.33; Vāit. 14.9; Kāu Ç. 24.17; 92.15.
41. गौरी (AV. गौर इन; TB. T.A. गौरी) मिमाय सलिलानि तक्ष RV. 1.164. 41[a]; AV. 9.10.21[a]; TB. 2.4.6.11[a]; AA. 1.5.3.8; TA. 1.9.4[a]; N. 11.40[a] Cf BṚHD. 4.42 (B).
42. तस्याः समुद्रा अधि विक्षरन्ति RV. 1.164.42[a]; AV. 9.10.21[c]; 13.1.42[d]; ÇÇ. 18.22.7; N.11.41[a]. See तस्यां etc.
43. शकमयं धूममारादपश्यं RV. 1.164.43[a]; AV. 9.10.25[a]
44. त्रयः केशिन ऋतुथा वि चक्षते RV. 1.164.44[a]; AV. 9.10.26[a]; N. 12.27[a] Cf BṚHD. 1.95
45. चत्वारि वाक् परिमिता पदानि RV. 1.164.45[a]; AV. 9.10.27[a]; ÇB. 4.1.3.17[a]; TB. 2.8.85[a]; AÇ. 3.8.1; JUB. 1.7.3[a]; 40.1[a]; N. 13.9[a]
46. इन्द्रं मित्रं वरुणमग्निमाहुः RV. 1.164.46[a]; AV. 9.10.28[a]; N. 7.18[a]; 14.1 Cf. Rvidh. 1.125.7; BṚHD. 4.42 (B).
47. कृष्णं नियानं हरयः सुपर्णा RV. 1.164.47[a]; AV. 6.22.1[a]; 9.10.22[a]; 13.3.9[a]; Ms. 4.12.5[a]; 193.7; Ks. 11.9[a], 13[a]; AÇ. 2. 13.7; N. 7.24[a]; P; कृष्णं नियानम् Vāit 9.5; MÇ.

5.2.6.10. designated as कृष्ण मन्त्र VHDH. 5.481; 6.356. See असित वर्णा

48. द्वादश प्रधयश्चक्रमेकं RV. 1.164.48[a]; AV. 10.8.4[a]; N.4.27.

49. यस्ते स्तनः शशयो (AV. Oyur) यो मयोभू RV. 1.164.49[a]; AV. 7.10.1[a]; Vs. 38. 5[a]; Ms. 4.9.7[a]; 127.7; 4.14.3[a]; 219.8; AB. 1.22. 2; ÇB. 14.2.1.15; 9.4.28[a]; TA. 4.8.2[a]; BrHU. 6.4.28[a]; AÇ 3.7.6; 4.7.4. Ps: यस्ते स्तनः शशयः TA. 5.7.3; Ap Ç. 15.9.6; यस्ते स्तनः TB. 2.8.2.8; ÇÇ. 5.10.5; KÇ. 26.5.7; MÇ. 4.3.3; KāuÇ. 32.1; PG. 1.16.22.

50. यज्ञेन यज्ञमयजयन्त देवाः RV. 1.164.50[a]; 10.90.16[a]; AV. 7.5.1[a]; VS. 31.16[a]; T.S.3.5.11.5[a]; MS. 4.10.3[a]: 148.16; 4.14.2: 218.2; KS. 15.12[a]; AB. 1.16.35[a]; KB. 8.2.; ÇB. 10.2.2.2.; TA. 3.12.7[a]; AÇ 2.16.7; N. 12. 41[a]. P : यज्ञेन यज्ञम् ÇÇ. 5.15.5; Vāit 13.13; MÇ, 5,1.3.4.

51. समानमेतदुदकम् RV. 1.164.51[a]; TA. 1.9.5[a]; ÇÇ. 18.22.7; N. 7.23[a].

52. दिव्यं सुपर्णं वायसं (AV. पयसम्; KS.VS.ÇB.TS. 4.7.13.1[b], वयसा ; MS.TS. 3.1.11.3[a], वयसम्) RV. 1.164.52[a]; AV. 4.14.6[b]; 7.39.1[a]; VS. 18.51[b]; TS. 3.1.11.3[a]; 4.7.13.1[b], MS. 2.12.3[b]; 146.5; KS. 18.15[b], 19.14[a]; ÇB. 9.4.4.3; AÇ. 2.8.3; 3.8.1; Suparṇ. 174; P : दिव्यं सुपर्णं ÇÇ 6.11.8; Kāu Ç. 24.9.



DESCRIPTION OF PLATES

The illustrations to the Mantras are mostly from the famous School of Vārāṇasī which flourished during the Golden Age of Indian History. These stone carvings graphically bring out the ideas enshrined in the Mantras, transferred, as it were, from literary documents to lithic forms by the racial sub-conscious of the people who had preserved them for thousands of years. The continuity of Indian tradition is writ large in these examples.

VISION IN LONG DARKNESS

[ऋषि दीर्घतमस्]

Ṛishi Dīrghatamas is said to have been a blind sage. As the name implies, he was the Seer in Long Darkness or Deep Mystery. As this long hymn abundantly shows he has tried to probe into the dark secrets of the Unmanifested Source of Creation. His style is that of riddles which on the face being obscure are essentially suggestive of numerous profound intimations.

The pupil-less eyes deeply sunk in the head may be blind to the conscious world, but are endowed with deep introvert vision turned on the inner worlds, viz. the regions of Mind and *Prāṇa*. The blindness of Dīrghatamas is in fact a refusal to accept the world of Matter or conscious state (*jāgrat avasthā*) as the only reality, but to enunciate the mysteries of the sub-conscious which is forever enveloped in darkness. He is describing the creational source or the First Cause in terms of visible forms, but invested with the meaning of the higher unmanifested modalities. The staring eyes *sans* extrovert vision are a focal feature of this mystical representation.

AGNI

[अग्नि —Mantra 1]

Mentioned with his Three Brothers and Seven Sons, this standing figure of Agni has an aureole (*Prabhāmaṇḍala*) of flames (*archīmshi*). There are two male attendants, one with a peacock is Kumāra-Kārttikeya. The other figure is defaced but has a cock at the back. The cock was the earlier symbol in the Kushāṇa period and

the peacock was substituted later in the Gupta Age. These were classical emendations of a much older iconography. The cock, however, is mentioned earlier in the Yajurveda 1.16, symbolizing the principle of *Vāk*, in its three vocal sounds of short, long and prolated vowels (*hrasva*, *dīrgha*, *pluta*). Agni itself, is the honey-tongued cock eating the sweet mead (*Madhu*) of *Prāṇa*, because of which each individual centre of Life is called a *Madhvad Suparṇa* (Mantra 22).

SEVEN SONS

[विश्पतिं सप्तपुत्रम्—Mantra 1]

It is the motif of Seven Sons or Seven Male Children of the Chief (*Viśpatiṁ Sapta-Putram,* Mantra 1), i.e. Agni or the Life-principle (*Prāṇāgni*). It must have been handed down from antiquity as a well-established motif of decoration. It was appropriate by carved on door-jamb panels, as at Sarnath, since Agni is spoken of as *Viśpati*, Lord of the Household. The Seven Male Children symbolise the Seven Principles of Manifestation from the Body of the One Father Creator, viz., Mind, Life and the Five Elements of Matter (*Manas-Prāṇa-Pañchabhūtas*).

THE TIME HORSE CARRIES

[कालो अश्वो वहति—Mantra 2]

In this Sūkta the Seer several times refers to the revolving Wheel of Time and also imports the imagery of Time as the Single Horse drawing the Chariot of the worlds (Mantras 2, 13 and 14). In the Atharva Veda there is a parallel idea that Time is the Horse which is transporting all beings and the worlds (*Kālo Aśvo vahati saptaraśmiḥ*, AV. 19.43.1).

SEVEN SINGING SISTERS

[सप्त स्वसारो अभि सं नवन्ते—Mantra 3]

The Seven Singing Sisters giving a choral song along with the Movement of the Chariot are graphically depicted in the accompanying illustration in Gupta Style from Ahichchhatrā. As pointed out in the commentary, the idea of Seven Sisters is familiar in the Ṛig Veda. They are the same as the Seven Mothers (*Sapta Mātaraḥ*), or the Seven Divine Mothers (*Sapta Mātrikāḥ*) of later art and mythology. In folk-lore

also this motif prevails widely as the Seven *Apsaraes* or Celestial Nymphs (सात अछरा माई). The motif of the seven elfs or fairies belongs to world folk-lore. It is illustrative of the single female power differentiated as seven for the sake of creation. The spectrum with seven rays of the solar octave is the exemplar of the team of Seven Sisters.

The reference in the Ṛig Veda, Urvaśi Sūkta (10.95), to the Seven Fairies in the form of ducks laving on the waters of a lake was also taken from Vedic folk-lore.

MOTHER AND FATHER

[माता पितरमृत आ बभाज––Mantra 8]

The idea expressed in this illustation is of the Mother, the Coy Dame, being filled with prolific dew by the Father. This is graphically brought out in the expressive face and pose of the Mother. The Vedic idea underlying this motif has been explained under Mantra 8. Svayambhū or the Self-existent Creator is the Father principle. Alone, he can not create. In the Universal or Parameshṭhī which is the Mother-principle, the Father- principle projects himself and the duality of the Female and the Male comes into existence for Life to incarnate in Matter. The region of *Ṛita* is that of Varuṇa (Mantra 47), which is here symbolised by the figures of *Gaṇas* or *Pramathas*, deformed Atlantes or dwarfs, who exist prior to the beautiful forms created by Father-Mother, or Indra and Indra-Patnī. Varuṇa is the King of the Asuras. He creates forms by deviating from the plumb-line, and therefore ugly and distorted in every way. Each Pramatha-Gaṇa is a type of Ashṭāvakra, who is full of angularity and obliqueness in all the eight components of *Manas*, *Prāṇa-Apāna* and *Pañcha-Bhūtas*. With a *Pramatha* or *Ashṭāvakra* nothing is correct or aligned to *Brahma-Sūtra*. But after the emergence of the Mother-cum-Father principle, the laws of measurement come into operation wherefore she is called *Mātā*, and is able to produce upright forms in accordance with the *Tālamāna* or rhythmic measures of Prajāpati, as expressed through *Yajña*.

MOTHER IN THREE UNITS OF DISTANCE

[माता त्रिषु योजनेषु––Mantra 9]

In Mantra 9 there is a reference to the Universal Mother walking three *yojanas*, with her Son which is the Cosmos, and for this the symbolism of the Cow going to the pasturage with her Calf is invoked. Here in the illustration the figure is that of

the Goddess seated on a Lotus in *Varada Mudrā.* On the two sides are extensions of triple bands. The first showing lotus petals symbolises the world of *Prāṇic* manifestation. The middle band showing scrolls is illustrative of the world of Mind (*Mansa*). The third or the lower register showing a series of triple strips or lines marks the numerous triads on the plane of material manifestation (*Bhūtas*).

THE AGELESS WHEEL REVOLVES

(वर्वर्ति चक्रं नहि तज्जराय—Mantra 11)

The Wheel of Time, *Kāla-Chakra,* is revolving ceaselessly for ever. It is spoken of as the undecaying, ageless Wheel. The eight Maidens of Space carry the Wheel in a whirling sweep. In the centre is the Wheel of sixteen spokes, surrounded by the first band of sixteen *tri-ratna* symbols, each at the top of a spoke.

The second band is occupied by *Ashṭa Dik-Kumārikāḥ,* symbolising the four cardinal and four intermediate regions of space. The last band shows a lotus garland interwoven with four full-blown lotuses, forming the four-fold *Svastika* inside each wheel as the terminal points of the two intersecting diameters. The Wheel of Vishṇu is described as consisting of four right angles of 90° each (RV. 1.155.6, *chaturbhiḥ sākaṁ navatiṁ cha nāmabhiśchakraṁ na vṛittaṁ*).

FATHER WITH TWELVE FACES

[द्वादशाकृति पिता—Mantra 12]

In describing the revolving Wheel of Time, *Saṁvatsara,* Dīrghatamas has invoked two kinds of symbols, viz. that of a revolving wheel with twelve spokes (*Dvādaśāraṁ varvarti chakraṁ,* Mantra 11) and that of a five-footed Father with twelve faces (*Pañchapādaṁ pitaraṁ dvādaśākṛitim*). All commentators are agreed that both imageries are applicable to *Saṁvatsara* with twelve months and five seasons.

The main interest of the design consists in its five concentric bands, each more expansive than the other, and the twelve-fold decorative patterns in which the second, third and fourth circles have been conceived. The central motif is that of a conspicuous full-blown lotus flower with seed vessels, small petals, big petals and sepals. The second row consists of twelve rosettes alternating with twelve fabulous winged animals (*Ihāmṛiga*), viz. bull, goose, elephant, lion, crocodile, leogryph, goat, camel, indistinct figure, elephant, antelope, and crocodile. The

third band which is most conspicuous contains 12 auspicious symbols eg. *Mīna-mithuna*, *Śrīvatsa*, *Pūrṇaghaṭa*, *Nāgapāśa*, *Śrīvatsa*, *Śaṅkha*, *Nāgapāśa*, *Svastika*, *Ratnapātra*, *Sragdāma*, *Nāgapāśa* and *Triratna*.

In the fourth band is a circular double garland interwoven at equal intervals with twelve flowers. It appears that the design was intended to depict the Sun-god with twelve dispositions, corresponding to the twelve faces (*Dvādaśākṛiti*) and five concentric *Maṇḍalas* arranged in depth, corresponding to the Five Steps or five seasons of the year.

TIME WHEEL FROM THE FULL JAR

[पूर्णः कुम्भोऽधि काल आहितः—Mantra 13]

The conception of Time as the Revolving Wheel occurs several times in the Asya Vāmīya Hymn. It is stated that this Wheel is moving eternally (*sanādeva*) and that it never cracks (*na śīryate*), becuase its Centre is connected with an immortal Navel (*Sa-Nābhi*). That source is the Full Vase which is the transcendent exhaustloss well of Life and Movement. The Pillar, *Axis Mundi* (*Skambha*), planted in the mouth of the Jar (Amṛita Kalaśa), supports the Revolving Wheel.

The Atharva Veda explicitly mentions Full Jar as the basis of Time (*pūrṇa-kumbho'dhi kāla āhitaḥ*, AV. 19.53.3). That source or unmanifest centre is revealing its potency by becoming omniform (*taṁ vai paśyāmo bahudhā nu santaḥ*, AV. 19.53.3).

WOMAN IN EACH MAN

[मानसी कन्या (शतरूपा) —Mantra 16]

Mantra 16 mentions the significant doctrine of Woman in Each Man, the principle of *Animus* and *Anima* in modern psychology. The figure illustrates the Youthful Girl (*yuvatir manīshā*), an incarnation of the primeval Female Principle, the Great Mother-Goddess (*Mahī Mātā*, RV. 5.47.1). The Creator in his transcendent form was both Male and Female (*Tvaṁ strī*, *tvaṁ pumān*), but, for the sake of creation, he conceived in his Mind his own Energy as the Female. She was his Mind-born Daughter (*Mānasī Kanyā*), and she inheres as the youthful woman in the sub-conscious of each Individual. In the Brāhmī label she is called *Yakshī*, the Mysterious Female who exists invisibly in the minds of all. Her name is *Chandrā*, the Mind- born, since the Moon is the symbol of the Cosmic Mind (*Chandramā manaso jātaḥ*, RV. 10.90.13).

The introvert eyes, head slightly lifted and tilted, smile on the lips, youthful breasts, rich coiffure, flowery decorations on cheeks (*viśeshaka*), long *bakula* wreath interwoven in the hair, heavy square and spiral ear-rings (*prākāra-vapra kuṇḍala*), flowing *Sarpa-Veṇī*, medallion *tilaka* on the forehead, chaplet of five auspicious motifs including *Śrīvatsa* in the centre flanked by a pair of *aṅkuśa*, four necklets of round pearls and cylindrical beads of sapphire, a five-stringed gold necklace of chain design (*sūtramālā*), a big *vaikakshyaka* garland of bead and reel passing from the left shoulder towards the right side, feathered armlets,—all these combine for perfection of the beautiful form. She is the ideal Woman symbolised as *Śatarūpā*, Hundredfold-Beauty (Brahmā's Youthful Female in the Puraṇas. Dīrghatamas conceives of such a Beauty concealed within each Man (*striyaḥ satīstāṁ u me puṁsa āhuḥ*). The Man with the eye of Mind (*akshaṇvān*) perceives or re-creates this Beauty in the dark chambers of the sub-conscious or in dream-state.

[*By courtesy* : *Director-General of Archaeology, India*].

GOD AS MIND

[देवं मनः—Mantra 18]

The Immortal principle of Mind reveals itself as the Cosmos. Creation is the Thought of its Maker. The Universe is the Wish-fulfilling Sacrifice of the Creator (*Kāmapra Yajña*, ŚB. 11.1.6.17). The Mind is the Light of Lights (*Jyotishāṁ Jyotiḥ*, VS, 34.1). The Cosmos is constituted of Three Lights (*Trīṇi Jyotīṁshi*, VS 8.36; also *Trīṇi Rochanā*, RV. 1.102.8). The Mind is like the solar Orb, the world-impeller (*Mano vai Savitā*, ŚB 6.3.1.13). Mind is Prajāpati, (ŚB, 4.1.1.22 *Prajāpatirvai Manaḥ*). Mind is Brəhmā (*Mano Brahmā* GB, 1.2.10). Mind is Brahman itself (*Mano Brahma*, GB 1.2.10). The Cosmos is a Thought-construct.

Mind is Agni, the Life-principle (*Mana eva Agniḥ*, ŚB 10.1.2.3). Mind is Indra (*Yan manaḥ sa Indraḥ*, GB. 2.4.11). Mind is Āditya (*Manaḥ Sāvitram*, KB. 16.4). Mind is an Ocean (*Mano vai Samudraśchhandaḥ*, ŚB. 8.5.2.4).

The illustration shows the Mind-Jewel (*Chintā-Maṇi*) with its thousandfold beams reflecting like the Rays of the Sun, or Sparks emitted from the Fire. The rectangular figure in the centre is the symbol of the Universal Mind with its threefold manifestations on the three sides in the form of three cusps, as Stūpa with two lateral and one top bulge. These represent the threefold principles of Mind, Life and Matter, integrated in a single functioning unit.

The parallelogram on right side is the symbol of the Individual Mind, reflecting a ray of the Universal. The intricate arabasque pattern of intertwining leaves and filaments represents a very complex scroll-work like the rays of thought shooting from the Mind and creating world-spirals. We may think of the endless waves on the surface of the Ocean, or of the intertwining creepers with their capillary filaments, or of the dense foliage on the trees, or of the scattering light-rays in their thousandfold majesty (*Sahasradhā Mahimānaḥ sahasram* RV. 10.114.8),—all statements are valid as based on the Truth of the One becoming the Many (*Ekam Sad Bahudhā*, RV. 1.164.46).

The subtle intermingling of the rising lines (*udak*) in oblique and tortuous forms (*arāji*) is difficult to extricate (*duḥ-saṁśleshaṇīyā*, Pañcha-Tantra, Edgerton, Text edition, Poona, p. 99). The Mind is verily a Lotus of Thousand Petals (*Sahasra-dala Padma*) and this infinite power of the Mind is illustrated here in magnificent form.

To the mysterious nature of Mind, Ṛishi Dīrghatamas draws attention in Mantra 18 (*Devaṁ Manaḥ kuto adhiprajātam*).

Mind is the Crest-Jewel (*Chintā-Maṇi*) on the crown of every person, a Jewel-Chest (*Vasudhāna-Kosha*) which contains all treasures, a Bejewelled Seat (*Maṇitaṭā*), a Jewel-Lotus (*Maṇi-Padma*).

TWO BIRDS

[द्वा सुपर्णा—Mantra 20]

Two Birds with fair wings, knit with bonds of friendship have found their refuge on one Tree :

Dvā Suparṇā sayujā sakhāyā samānaṁ vṛikshaṁ parishasvajāte

One of them eats the Sweet Fig, the other eating not regardeth only. As explained in the commentary this is with reference to the Individual Soul (*Jīvātmā*) and the Universal Soul (*Paramātmā*).

WORLD GUARDIAN IN THE ASSEMBLY OF BIRDS

[विश्वस्य भुवनस्य गोपा एवं सुपर्ण-विदथ—Mantra 21]

In the centre is the figure of Sūrya holding lotuses in two uplifted hands, and seated in *bhadrāsana* on a full-blown lotus. Lotus rhizomes issue forth from the upper and lower buds, spreading on right and left in meanders which contain four

pairs of birds, perched on full-blown lotuses. The first two pairs are looking towards the central figure and the other two pairs are looking away. The whole composition is framed on its upper and lower margins. On the bottom is again a band comprising Solar motifs.

The scene is an appropriate representation of the imagery in Mantra 21. The figure in the centre is that of the World Guardian (*Viśvasya Bhuvanasya Gopāḥ*), same as Prajāpati-Sūrya. Sūrya is the symbol of the Supernal Sun or Brahman (*Brahma Sūrya-samaṁ Jyotiḥ*, VS. 23.48). The full-blown lotus flower is the cosmos (*Bhū-padma* also called *Pushkara*), and the lotus rhizome as expanding manifestation is present in all centres of life.

The Birds signify the Suparṇas or Individual Souls, who ceaselessly sing songs of immortal life and sit in an assembly (*Amṛitasya bhāgam animeshaṁ vidathābhisvaranti*). The two birds who look towards the Guardian figure belong to the region of immortality, that is, they receive their portion of *Amṛitam* from its universal source in Prajāpati, or World Sovran, But the two pairs who look away are in the grip of *Mṛityu*. The first two pairs are bathed in light and the other two are enveloped in darkness. These Suparṇas are symbols of the individual souls which incarnate in Matter as male and female pairs.

This picture seems to have been a textile design of the silk-weavers of ancient Vārāṇasī, which was reproduced on the stone casing (*Śilā-kaṇchuka*) of the Dhamekha Stūpa during the Gupta period. A grand celebration of universal joy famous in the language of that period as *Kaśī-Maha* took place on that occasion and is referred to in the Divyāvadāna.

THREE BIRDS

[त्रयः सुपर्णाः—Mantra 22]

The motif of the Three Birds (*Trayaḥ Suparṇāḥ*, AV. 18.4.4., RV. 10.114.3) is mentioned here in two Mantras as Birds perched on the same Tree, roosting and breeding together (Mantras 21 & 22). The Three Birds in the illustration hold a festooned pearl-garland of multiple clusters and are flying together with it. The Three Birds symbolise the three Prāṇic forces, Prāṇa, Apāna and Vyāna, the presence of which together as a team makes Life possible in the body. The sages speak of the One Bird as Many (*Suparṇaṁ vipraḥ kavayo vachobhir ekaṁ santam bahudhā kalpayanti*, RV. 10.114.5).

The central figure is framed on the top by a *Pūrṇa Ghaṭa* design placed inside a Bowl, covered on top with lotus-leaf decorations and below by a *Makarikā* ornament in half-medallion and on the bottom a *Nāgadanta* motif with pearl-festoons.

THE WISH-FULFILLING COW

[कामदुघा —Mantra 26]

The symbolism of the Cow is basic to Ṛig Vedic Cosmogony. It is the key to the thought of about a dozen Mantras of this Sūkta. The imagery of the Cow, Calf, Milk, Butter, Cowherd, Cow-pen far exceeds all other symbols in its expressive beauty and depth of meaning. Cow is the symbol of the Divine Mother (*Deva-Mātā*) and therefore indentified with Aditi. Cow is Universal Nature (*Virāj*), or the same as Primordial Matter (*Prakṛiti*), sired by the Self-existent Creator as Bull. Cow is the principle of *Vāk*. In classical Sanskrit, *Gauḥ* is Earth, Rays of the Sun, and Speech, and all these meanings are authenticated in the Vedic Mantras.

Mantra 26 is the exaltation of the Wish-Fulfilling Mother Cow called *Sudughā Dhenu*, the *Kāma–Dhenu* of the Purāṇas and Kāvyas. The Wish-Fulfilling Cow was the Jewel produced at the churning of the primeval Ocean by the dual potencies of the Creator symbolised as *Deva* and *Asura*. Mother Nature is that Cow whose teats flow with the milk of eternal sustenance. The principle of nourishment (*Posha*) is the Milk of the Cow, also called Soma. Each individual Life-centre is a Calf and also a skilled Milker whose ten fingers draw out the milk from the udders of the ten-fold *Virāj*.

The Cow is the visible symbol of all the divine powers of Indra or the Prāṇic principle (*Imā yā gāvaḥ sa janāsa Indraḥ*, RV. 6.28.5). Milk and Butter are the twin gifts of Mother Cow. They are both mixed in the Boiling Milk-pot (*Gharma*) which is the symbol of the human body. वैश्वानरमजस्रं घर्मम्, VS. 26.6. Milk is the symbol of all secretions and Butter of the fecundating Seed (*Retas*).

The Universal Cow is given the sublime epithet of Aditi, with the prayer that the Immortality of the Cow may contribute to the Life of the Individual :

Mātā rudrāṇāṁ duhitā vasūnāṁ svasādityānām amṛitasya nābhiḥ
Pra nu vochaṁ chikitushe janāya mā gām anāgām aditiṁ vadhishṭa.

(RV. 8.101.15)

" Mother of *Rudras*, Daughter of *Vasus*, Sister of *Ādityas*, Navel of Immortality, Cow is Aditi; do not violate Her. Thus we declare to the man of understanding."

This concept is amplified in the Bhāgavata legend of Parīkshit guaranteeing the security of the Cow from the clutches of Kali.

THE COW GIVING SNIFF-KISS TO HER CALF

[हिङ्कृण्वती वसुपत्नी—Mantra 28]

The design shows on right side the Mother Cow and on left the Calf; the hind parts of their bodies are stylized as intricate scroll-work. The Mother Cow is giving a sniff-kiss on the head of the Calf as stated in the Mantra :

'The Cow hath lowed after her blinking youngling; she licks his forehead as she lows to form it.'

The body of the Cow is measured out distinctly into three portions, the front one, the middle one and the hind one, as described in Mantra 9 (त्रिषु योजनेषु). The body of the calf also is sprawled out in three portions. The mother licks him and he licks the mother (*Taṁ mātā reḷhi sa u reḷhi mātaram*, RV. 10. 114. 4). *Vāk* as the Cow or Mother Nature licks her calf which is the Life-principle *Prāṇa*.

MOVES BACKWARD AND FORWARD

[अपाङ् प्राङेति—Mantra 38]

In Mantra 38 the Ṛishi speaks of the Divine Power which controls the two-fold rhythm of the Cosmos : Backward and Forward goes he, impelled by an intrinsic Power, the Immortal born as the brother of the Mortal is moving (*Apāṅ prāṅ eti svadhayā gṛibhīto amartyo martyenā sayoniḥ*).

THOUSAND-SYLLABLED SPEECH IN THE HIGHEST HEAVEN

[सहस्राक्षरा परमे व्योमन्—Mantra 41]

The illustration shows the Auspicious Divine Conch (*Bhadra Divya Śaṅkha*) in the left corner with foliated scrolls (*patralatā*) rising from its mouth and spreading towards the right. The Conch as the Source of Sound symbolises *Ākāśa* and the Divine Conch, the *Parama Ākāśa*, or what is known as *Parama Vyoma* in the Vedic doctrine of the Highest Empyrean as the Source of the Thousand-syllabled, Infinite and Unmanifested Speech (*Sahsrāksharā Parame Vyoman*, Mantra 41) and of the manifested syllables in the form of the Mantras (*ṛicho akshare parame vyoman*, Mantra 39). The doctrine of *Parama Vyoma* also occurs in the Nāsadīya Sūkta of the Ṛig Veda (RV. 10. 129.1).

The Immortal Conch is Silence, but the Breath of Brahman passes through it to produce *Ākāśa* with Sound, expressed as measured syllables, viz. *Ṛichaḥ* or *Chhandāṁsi*. The spiral scrolls are the symbols of manifest *Vāk* from an inexhaustible source which depends for its waves on the breath of one who blows it.

TRIADS, TETRADS AND PENTADS

[त्रयं चतुष्टयं पाङ्क्तम्—Mantras 1, 13, 36, 42, 44]

This symbolical drawing is of deep significance conceived by a genius soaked in the spirit of traditional Indian metaphysics. It appears to be standing up from the sub-conscious of the race as a whole. The very first Mantra speaks of the trinitarian foundation of the Cosmos through the symbolism of the Three Brothers of Agni.

In the centre is the triadic pattern which is the outcome of a basic duality kept apart by an intervening force which is like the *Antariksha* between Earth and Heaven. The trinitarian principle is the foundation of the Vedic and subsequent Indian philosophy and religion. The doctrine of Trinity is known as *Trayī Vidyā*. It is said that Prajāpati first of all brought into existence the basic plan of threefold manifestation as three Lokas, three Devas, three Vedas, three Guṇas and three Fires of *Yajña* (*sa prajāpatir Brahmaiva prathamam asṛijata, trayīmeva vidyām*, ŚB. 6.1.1.8). Sūrya is the arch-symbol of *Trayī Vidyā* (*saishā trayyeva vidyā tapati*, ŚB. 10.5.2.2).

The fourfold scheme of creation is also a favourite theme of Vedic thought (*Chatushṭayaṁ vā Idaṁ Sarvam*). It is based on the *Svastika* in the centre or heart of every being, same as the Fonr Regious of Space (*Pradiśaśchatasraḥ*) of Mantra 42. It is compared to the *Sudarśana Chakra* of Vishṇu, which is a perfect circle consisting of four angles of 90 degrees each (*chaturbhiḥ sākaṁ navatiṁ cha nāmabhiśchakraṁ na vṛittam*, RV. 1.155.6). Brahman is said to be fourfooted (*chatushpād*) and so is the individual Self. Indeed the Yajña is the best exemplar of the tetradic plan of creation. It is said in the Brāhmaṇas that the cosmos is the activity of the Four Priests. *yadvā idaṁ kiñcha tat sarvaṁ chaturhotāraḥ*, TB. 2.3.5.5.). Prajāpati himself is named as *Chaturhotā*, i.e. all the four priestly patterns inhere in his transcendence (TB. 2.2.3.5). The four spirals in the right trough stand as symbolical representations of the fourfold scheme.

On the left is the combination of five spirals representing the Pentads of creativity (*Pāṅkto vai yajñaḥ* ŚB. 1.5.2.16), same as the Wheel of Five Spokes (*Pañchāra chakra*) of Montra 13. The cosmic process is rooted in a fivefold scheme and so is Purusha (*pāṅktaḥ purushaḥ*, KB. 13.2. AB. 2.14).

The three designs are beautifully connected by a garland of beads (*gulikā-hāra*), divided into three festoons (*santānaka*), hanging from four rosettes.

FOUR STEPS OF SPEECH

[चत्वारि वाक् परिमिता पदानि—Mantra 45]

Vāk is the Mother-principle manifesting in Fourfold Rhythms, or measuring out in Fourfold Steps.

This bold drawing is seemingly complex, but of clarity as conceived in four similar parts, separated yet integrated in their composition. The design consists of four crest-jewels, of male and female symbolised forms, the former trapezoid and the latter oval. Each of these is crowned by four circles in which the idea of a fourfold composition (*Chatushṭayaṁ*) is illustrated. Round each of these crested figures there are four lotus leaves of scroll design, one each in the four corners. Below them is a long lotus creeper reproducing the male and the female symbols under the respective trapezoid and oval figures. These four compartments, each conceived on the basis of upright *Brahmasūtra* line, are unified at the bottom by double pearl necklaces arranged in four festoons, intended to unify the fourfold scheme.

The idea of Fourfold Speech is inherent in the Tetradic pattern of Cosmic Manifestation, as illustrated in the *Svastika Paṭṭa* below from Mathura.

PRAJĀPATI SUPARṆA

[प्रजापति सुपर्ण—Mantra 46]

We find several times in this Hymn the imagery of *Suparṇa*, viz. One Bird (Mantra 46), Two Birds (Mantra 20), and Many Birds (Mantras 21 & 22); also the ultimate station of the One Beautiful Bird. (Mantra 7). The Face with goggle eyes revolving in their sockets and framed by woolly hair is indicative of the primeval magnificence of the Creator. Prajāpati with *Suparṇa* by his side, illustrates the idea *Prajāpatir vai Suparṇo Garutmān*, ŚB. 10.2.2.4, RV. 1.164.46, 10.149.3, *Suparno aṅga savitur Garutmān pūrvo jātaḥ sa u asyānu dharma.* The Face of Glory may be looked upon as the symbol of Sūrya or Golden Person in the Sun, called *Ḥiranmaya Yājusha Purusha*, i.e. the genius of dynamic motion or *Rajas*.

The conception is also typified as *Purusha Suparṇa* (*Purushaḥ Suparṇaḥ*, ŚB. 7.4.2.5). He is the Universal Prajāpati and the Individual *Suparṇa.* In Purāṇic terminology it is the same as Brahmā with *Haṁsa*, or Vishṇu with Garuḍa.

THE GOLDEN GERM

[हिरण्यगर्भ—Mantra 47]

Hiraṇyagarbha is a significant idea of Vedic cosmogony. *Hiraṇya* or gold, is the symbol of Prāṇa or the Life-principle. *Garbha* is the Egg or ovum which becomes transformed as the Child or Babe. *Hiraṇya* is the Father-principle and *Garbha* is the Mother-principle. The Union of the two results in the birth of the Child or the Fecundated Egg. Prajāpati himself becomes *Hiraṇyagarbha* for the sake of creation. All life starts from *Hiraṇyagarbha*. Life signifies the unending chain of the *Hiraṇyagarbha* principle. Hiraṇyagarbha has many synonyms in Vedic symbolism, e.g. Agni, Indra, Sūrya, Prajāpati, Nārāyaṇa, Prāṇa, Haṁsa, Suparṇa. As Agni he is the Son of Waters (*Apāṁ Napāt*). *Hiraṇyagarbha* as the Cosmic Egg impregnated with Life is born from the primeval Ocean or floats on its Waters for a thousand years, or endless durations of Time. The Waters (Mother-principle) existed in the beginning, they desired to procreate, they performed *Tapas*, and from their fervour was produced the Golden Egg (*tāsu tapastapyamānāsu hiraṇmayam āṇḍaṁ saṁbabhūva . . . . .tadidaṁ hiraṇmayāṇḍaṁ yāvat saṁvatsarasya velā tāvat paryaplavata*, ŚB. 11.1.611).

This beautiful painting of the Himachal School illustrates this cosmogonical idea, further elaborated in the Bhāgavata and other Purāṇas. It had its origin in the Vedic *Hiraṇyagarbha Vidyā*. The painting is a rare symbolical document in the whole field of Indian Art.

[*By courtesy of Rai Krishnadasa, Bharat Kala Bhavan*]

SUN-WHEEL

[चक्रमेकम्—Mantra 48]

This illustration is taken from the Mountain Solar Chariot (*Mahā-Sūrya-Ratha*) carved as the Sun Temple at Koṇārka. It is a vivid example of the Revolving Wheel of Time or *Saṁvatsara*, symbolised as the Wheel. Its imagery is fully described in Mantras 2, 3, 11,12,13, 14.

In the outer felly, spokes and the central nave a number of medallions illustrate a whole world of human and animal forms, showing the rush of worldly life. The centre of the Wheel is constituted of three concentric bands as stated in the Mantra (*trīṇi nābhyāni*). The intricate arabesques and check-patterns filling the interspaces of the spokes illustrate the complex aspects of life in geometrical and floral

forms. There can be no fuller picture of the gaiety of life than depicted in the figures of singing couples, toileting women, heroes and princes riding horses and elephants as shown here.

[*By courtesy* : *Director-General of Archaeology, India.*]

MOTHER'S BREAST, A LAKE OF MILK

[यस्ते स्तनः शशयो यो मयोभूः —Mantra 49]

Mantra 49 is an invocation of the Great Goddess, Universal Mother Sarasvatī, Lady of the Lotus Lake or Brahmā's Infinite Ocean of Wisdom (*Brāhma-Saraḥ*). It is the Lake of Milk, the Creative Sustaining Principle which the Haṁsa or discerning Mind, suckles from the milking Breast of the Mother.

This illustration is taken from the School of Mathura Sculpture, showing the Goddess appearing on the crest of a *Pūrṇa Kalaśa*. She is offering her Exhaustless Breast, the Spring of Bliss with which She feeds all creatures. She bestows all best things for universal sustenance. The Mother's Breast is the Divine Fountain with gushing springs of plenty for creating Mind, Life and Body (*Manas, Prāṇa-Vāk* or *Pañcha-bhūtas*), which represent the essential principles of manifestation *Ashṭa Vasu*) and the Seven Jewels (*Sapta Ratna*).

AGNI WITH SOMA IN A MAṆḌALA

[अग्नयः पर्जन्याः – अग्नीषोमात्मकं जगत् –Mantra 51]

This illustration shows a male figure seated at ease holding a lotus and resting against a Full Vase. The figure stands for the principle of Prāṇa-Agni and the Water-pot for that of Soma. This fundamental conception has been expressed through various symbols, e.g. the Divine Prajāpati or Brahmā with his Water Jar *Kamaṇḍalu* or *Soma Kalaśa*), or Agni as the spirit produced from the Waters (*Apāṁ Napāt*), or Prāṇic Principle called *Vasishṭha* born from the Jar.

THE DIVINE ON WINGS

[दिव्य सुपर्ण--Mantra 52]

This is an illustration of the Winged Divine or *Divya Suparṇa*. The idea is that the creative principle manifesting in the form of the cosmos is based on Rhythm, like the flapping of the avain wings. Prajāpati himself is conceived of as the Great

Eagle, *Mahā-Suparṇa*, since He has a two-fold aspect, viz. Rest in the unmanifest cause (*Sthiti*) and Movement in creation (*Gati*). The imagery is transferred to the Revolving Wheel Of Time, *Saṁvatsara-Chakra*, which is also spoken of as *Maha-Suparṇa*, the Bird of Strong Pinions. In the cyclic movement of Day and Night, two Halves of the Month, two Semesters, the Sages discovered the rhythm underlying the flux of Time.

Mantra 52 mentions the symbolism of the Divine Bird, *Divya Suparṇa*; the same is also conceived of as the Golden Goose (*Hari-Haṁsa*, AV. 10.8.18), where Sūrya is the Golden Bird said to be on a flight for a Thousand Divine Days towards some unknown immortal Fixed Point (*Svarga, Amrita Nābhi*) as its destination. In the Ṛig Veda the Golden *Haṁsa* is Indra himself (RV. 10.124.9). In Vedic symbolism when once Indra is invoked, the entire gamut of Agni, Prāṇa, Nārāyaṇa, Purusha, Hiraṇyagarbha, Prajāpati, Haṁsa, Suparṇa, Sūrya, etc., also is implied as a matter of course.

Divya Suparṇa here is said to be the Son of Waters (*Apām Garbham*) which is an epithet of Agni, and this points to the imagery of the *Haṁsa* floating on the surface of the primeval Lake of Brahmā. From this point of view, the Golden Goose (*Hari-Haṁsa*) or *Hiraṇya-Paksha Śakuni* (*Bhīshma-Stavarāja*, Śānti Parva, 47. 29) is addressed as *Sarasvān*, Goose of the Lake, which is no other than Sūrya himself floating in the Universal Ocean of Ṛita (*Pārameshṭhya Soma-Samudra*).



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I. VISION IN LONG DARKNESS

V. S. AGRAWALA

